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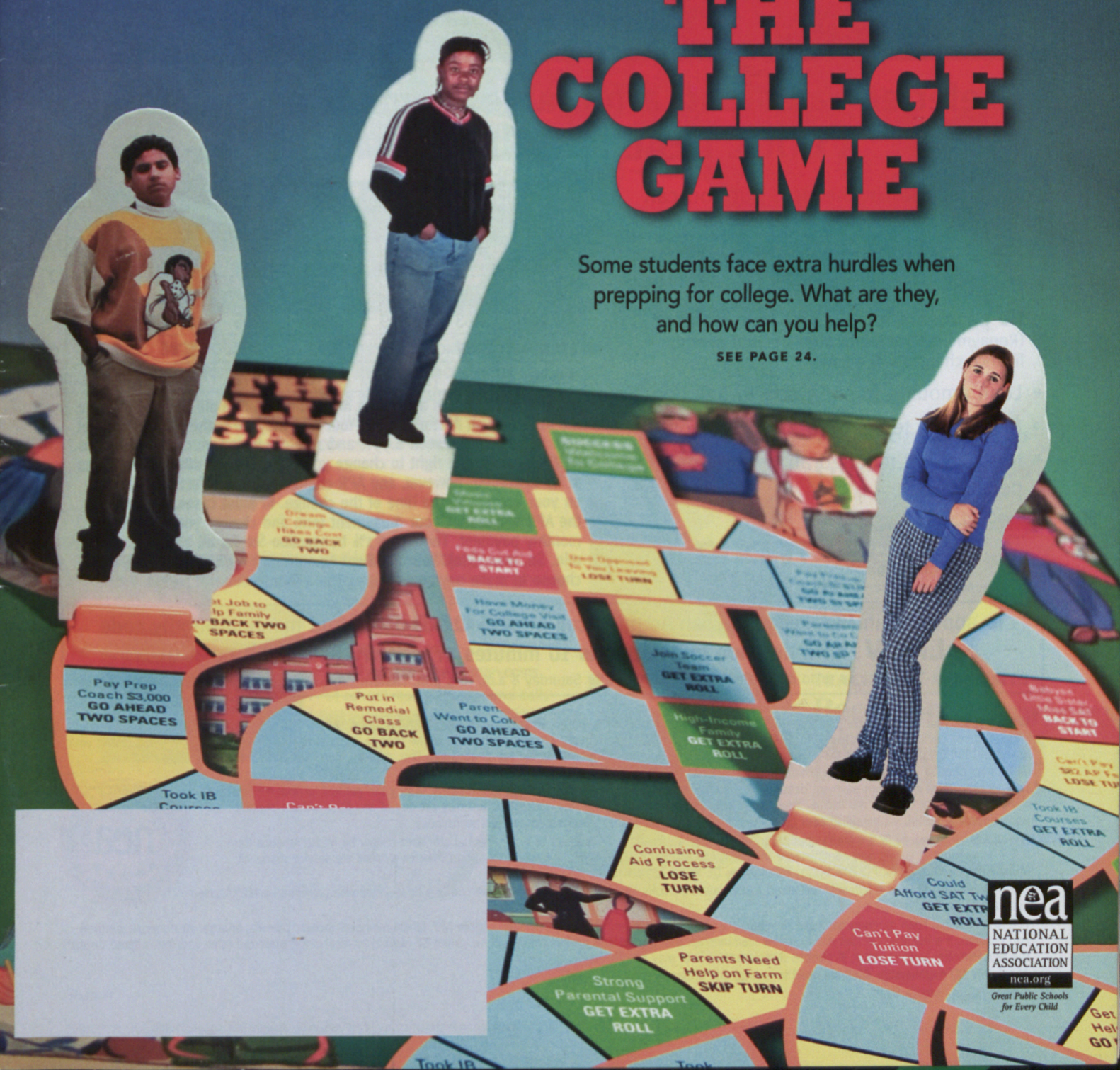
NOVEMBER 2005

neatoday

THE COLLEGE GAME

Some students face extra hurdles when prepping for college. What are they, and how can you help?

SEE PAGE 24.


Pay Prep Coach $3,000 GO AHEAD TWO SPACES
Put in Remedial Class GO BACK TWO
Have Money For College Visit GO AHEAD TWO SPACES
Dream College Has a Cost GO BACK TWO
Fees Cut And BACK TO START
Took IB Courses GET EXTRA ROLL
Confusing Aid Process LOSE TURN
Can't Pay Tuition LOSE TURN
Parents Need Help on Farm SKIP TURN
Strong Parental Support GET EXTRA ROLL
High-Income Family GET EXTRA ROLL
John Soccer Team GET EXTRA ROLL

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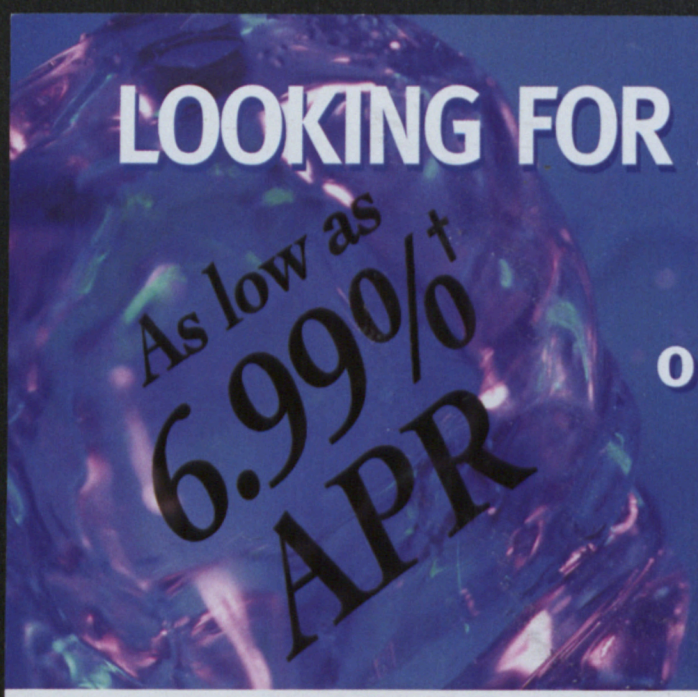

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NOVEMBER

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features

COVER 24

THE COLLEGE GAME

Getting into college can be especially tough for poor and minority students, who often face financial and other obstacles. But NEA members are helping kids to level the playing field and gain admission. What are the strategies behind their success?

RESEGREGATION

American Apartheid 32

Education advocate Jonathan Kozol exposes the human costs of school resegregation and calls educators to action.

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Displaced Gulf Coast students may be settling into their new schools, but Hurricane Katrina still offers lessons—and opportunities to grow—for us all.

PHOTO TOP: DAVE GATLEY; PHOTO LEFT: MICHAEL QUAN; PHOTOS RIGHT TOP: CHRIS DORST; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF FEMA

Ms. Jagger

"For most of elementary school I was painfully shy. But when I got to 4th grade, Ms. Jagger always used to ask me to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There was something about the way she asked me...her eyes kind of sparkled, as if it were some kind of enormous honor. It definitely pulled me out of my shell a little, I think."

Preya, Golf Driver

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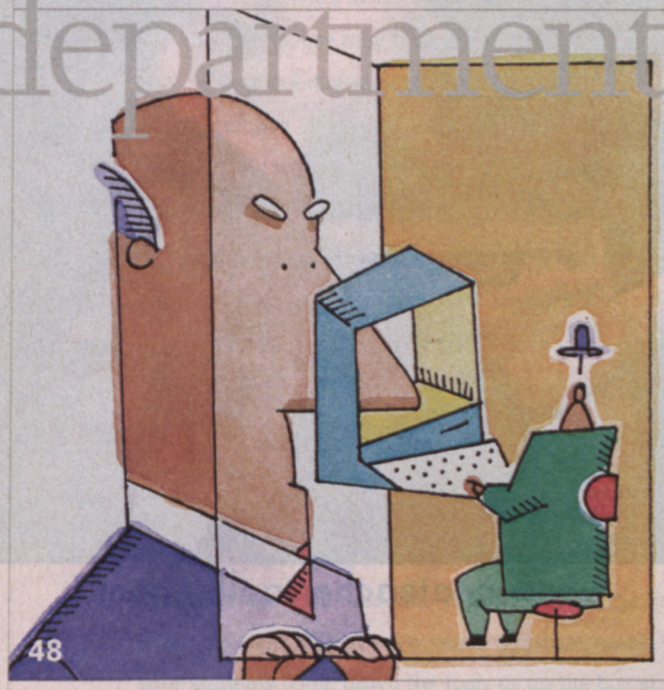

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ILLUSTRATION LEFT: ROBIN JAREAUX; SMALL PHOTOS FROM TOP: JESSE TINSLEY, JILL CHRISTIANSON, STOCKBYTE, LACY LUEHRS
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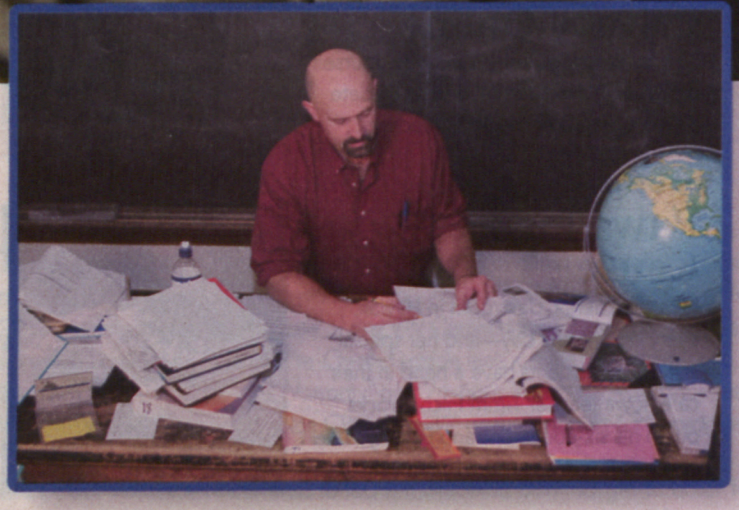

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Season of Giving

I can remember every baby gift bestowed upon my children—the stuffed leopard, the (really big) baby booties, the piggy finger puppets—and even more, the people who were kind enough to give them. Gift-giving creates a special connection. So while some people may see West Virginia teacher Lisa Cox as a clutter-fiend—in 20 years she's never thrown away a single gift from a student (yup, see page 37)—I see a woman who's connected. Her house may be crowded, but her heart is full too. ¶ This holiday season, the traditionally valued gifts of life and love and family have been elevated after the tragic losses from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. As part of the legions of donors and volunteers, NEA members have been giving aid to fellow educators and students. Houston school counselor Bonnie Stover helped displaced students like kindergartner Sir Henri (pictured, far left). Louisiana member Lena Alleman took in a displaced family after Katrina, and when Rita struck Alleman's area, the family in turn offered aid to her and her husband. ¶ NEA has created the NEA Hurricane Relief Fund, pledging $1 million to go directly to educators and their students. To contribute to the Fund, and to read more on how educators are helping in the relief effort, visit the Web at www.nea.org/disasterrelief. And see our story on page 40. ¶ And as the holidays approach and your students come down the halls or up the bus stairs bearing gifts, you're bound to get some memorable items. It's up to you whether to keep them for 20 years. But if you'd like others to see what gifts students can bring, post a story at www.nea.org/neatoday, and tell the world about your connections.

PHOTO: SAM PIERSON

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Katrina: We Are Family

I'll never forget walking into a middle school in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, smelling water-logged books and school supplies in towering piles of Katrina debris, and seeing a brand-new basketball floor that was warped so bad it had to be taken up.

But I also won't forget the smiles of the children; or hugging NEA members who had just had their own homes under 20 feet of water, but still managed to find the energy and will to scrub floors so school could start up again.

And I won't forget how much it meant to all of them when I handed over a check for $2,500 because NEA members from around the country wanted to help.

I saw the same expressions of gratitude in Jackson, Mississippi, when I told School Board members NEA would buy uniforms for hundreds of displaced Katrina children they had taken in, so the children would feel like the other children in their new schools.

No natural disaster in American history has displaced America's school children in such a way as Katrina. It left 372,000 of them with no school to attend; it closed 700 schools, 100 damaged beyond repair; and it means thousands of NEA members have no jobs.

Across the country, the NEA family knew what to do when people hurt. We mobilized. We set out to raise $1 million to help all the public school employees get back on their feet, and to support those who are taking in the displaced children.

As soon as the money started coming in, I went on a trip to the Gulf Coast to start handing it out, because the need is now.

We set up a helpline, and there have been days when more than a thousand teachers and education support professionals have called asking for emergency aid, be it to pay for medication or rent an apartment. One call was from a husband and wife, both NEA members, who had their house, their car, and their school all under water.

We set up an adopt-a-school program, and hundreds of organizations have called, saying count us in, we want to assist. And we are asking some NEA staff to go to the area because an extra hand never hurts.

I learned something else from my visit: we need to be there for the long haul.

When the news crews leave, and government officials stop doing their photo ops, educators will still be there—caring for the children and teaching in trailers.

And the children will still have the emotional scars and residual problems from the nightmares of life and death, being rescued from rooftops and living in shelters.

I saw it first-hand. I was in a school in Pasadena, Texas, just outside of Houston, where a number of families had relocated. It was a few days before Hurricane Rita was to come ashore, and that afternoon children were being told they needed to evacuate.

Walking down the hallway, I felt as though I could spot the children originally from New Orleans. They were the ones with a certain look in their eyes.

PHOTO: SAM PIERSON

"When the news crews leave, and government officials stop doing their photo ops, educators will still be there—caring for the children and teaching in trailers."

–REG WEAVER

It hasn't been easy for them, or their big-hearted new teachers scattered in 25 states.

The truth is, it won't get any easier, especially during the holidays. So I ask that you continue to send money so we can exceed our $1 million goal. You can visit our Web site (www.nea.org/disasterrelief) and make an online contribution, or send a check to the NEA Hurricane Relief Fund.

I know teachers and education support professionals don't make big salaries. I know you now pay $3-a-gallon for gas. I know how generous you already have been, giving through the Red Cross, or your place of worship, or the local store.

That money has made a huge difference, and so has all the money NEA has distributed. But problems remain, and we are a family. Let's continue to help our education family in the TEAM NEA fashion. NEA appreciates you and so do I.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

What's he worth? Plenty.

To heck with the "energy Kirk Petit might not have to do his personal best in the classroom." (cover story, October.) Quite frankly, I'm concerned about his ability to enjoy the more important things in life: children, marriage, and good health, to name a few. An educator being forced to work three jobs to support his family is appalling and unacceptable. His dedication to teaching is admirable, but he and other educators who are in a similar situation are paying a much higher price than this story told.

JILL WEDDINGTON
Omaha, Nebraska

I am now retired and working as a student teacher supervisor. My students are so motivated about teaching and yet so fearful of how they will survive on the disgusting income of a teacher.

BILL JARVIS
Alameda, California

I am all for increases in teaching salaries, but I take issue with the salary comparisons in the article "The Bill's Come Due." If NEA is going to make comparisons it has to be for equal number of days and hours worked.

I am a teacher who earns $44,000 for 182 days of work. My husband is an electrical engineer who earns $88,000 for 264 days of work. That works out to $242 and $333 per day, respectively. If I were paid for the same number of days that he is, then I would make $63,888 per year. Doesn't look so bad now, does it?

KERRY SWIER
Longview, Washington

Let's also factor in how "wonderful" the cost of insurance is these days. All of my non-teaching friends are so quick to point out that my "salary may be low, but [I] get great benefits." We pay for those benefits and more! It is rough. There is not a one of us that hasn't taken time away from our own children to make extra income, and we still barely make ends meet each month. Hats off to Kirk Petit for speaking out!

JENNIFER GRENIER
Fremont, Nebraska

DESIGN DISAGREEMENT

I have accepted the fact that NEA has an ideology that is different from my own and even promotes evolution. I do take offense, however, when you choose to make a mockery of religion (TalkBack, October.) I would expect to see a political cartoon like this one in a national newspaper, but not in a publication that should serve to unify teachers, not alienate them. I'm not saying that intelligent design needs to be taught in the schools, rather that NEA could afford to take a more moderate stance and not take low blows at its members' beliefs.

JASON KIBBE
Orrstown, Pennsylvania

HOO-RAH OR HOO-HAH?

Military recruiters, some of them combat veterans, should be treated with courtesy and respect, as should any visitors to our schools (Rights Watch, October.) The military protects our rights. And if a recruiter wants to give me a donut or remember my birthday, it's fine with me. I think it is called courtesy for using my work facilities.

RICHARD R. SLATER
Arlington, Washington

THE D WORD—DEVELOPMENT

Developing relationships is the nonpunitive, non-coercive way to manage kids ("The D Word," September). If we want to do more than punish and reward kids, we need to help them learn about why they do what they do, their effect on others, and how to make choices that support learning and relationships rather than hinder them.

This learning can take place in class problem-solving meetings, one-on-one conferencing, and conflict resolution sessions. All of these require relationships to engage students in honest conversations to get at what is happening. In my own teaching life, the students I have had the most difficulty with were students with whom I had a hard time building a solid and trusting relationship.

SCOTT TYINK
La Crosse, Wisconsin

PONDERINGS ON PADDLING

I began teaching in 1949, under a principal who was a firm believer in the use of the paddle. ("Would you support corpo-

CYBER-COMMENTARY

A Girl Named Katrina

From a teacher working with Hurricane Katrina evacuees:

A young mother brought her two children over and expressed concern that her 3-year-old had not spoken since the disaster. Gradually we got her to open up by holding her and blowing bubbles with her. Soon she began to draw me a picture. Next came the dolls, then the soccer ball. She was starting to play more. When the snacks came out and we were relaxing, I asked her if she was having fun, and she said "Yes!"—her first word in days. My heart filled with happiness. By giving her a little sense of normalcy, she had begun to open up and talk. I asked her her name, and her sister Simone said it was Katrina. I will always remember the little girl with the same name as the horrible storm.

DALLAS, TEXAS

WANT TO WEIGH IN?
Chat with your colleagues on NEA's discussion boards at **www.neatoday.org/talkback.html**.

ral punishment's use in your school?" September.)

I didn't question the policy because it was common practice, both at home and at school. A routine comment from the parent was, "If you get paddled at school, you'll get double when you get home." It reflected the parent's respect for the school system, a quality that seems to have disintegrated over the years.

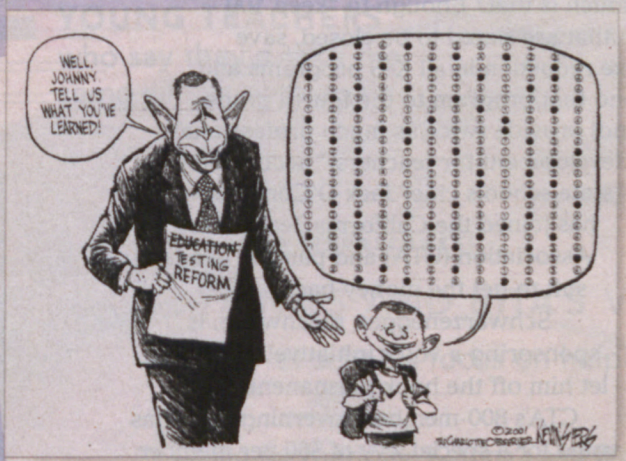
I probably wouldn't resort to corporal punishment today. Could I have managed without it? Perhaps. I respect today's teachers who manage to succeed despite the onerous obstacles they have to overcome.

HAROLD D. MORRIS
Menlo Park, California

It is of the utmost importance for teachers and parents alike to realize that a misbehaving child is a discouraged child. They may be seeking attention, power, revenge, or avoidance of failure. On some level their misbehavior is working for them—if only to get a little attention or even reinforce for themselves a belief that they are a "bad kid."

The definition that we should all adopt of discipline is "to teach and to train" with the goal of children learning self-discipline.

CHARLENE GERBIG
Hillsdale, New Jersey



ANXIETY FOLLOWS STORMS

My family and I live in Jackson, Mississippi, and we are very fortunate indeed because our loved ones and property are fine. My oldest son has a classmate whose house was totaled by a fallen tree. My son saw the destruction in the morning after Katrina. That afternoon with tears rolling down his cheeks he told me, "Mom I'm so stressed. [His classmate] must be devastated." Returning to school has been good for him. For children it is a sign that life does go on. Teachers, please keep your eyes and ears open for children who could benefit from therapy in the wake of Katrina.

EVELYN S. GARNER ARAUJO
Jackson, Mississippi

In the aftermath of Katrina, our school (60 miles south of New Orleans) took in many hurricane victims, and many live in shelters across our city. My seventh-grade English students wrote poems in cards and distributed them to the victims in the shelters.

Many of these students agreed that it was a life-changing experience for them to reach out in this way. One even said, "I will never beg my parents for anything ever again."

Not only did my students learn a little bit about poetry during those few days, they learned much about humanity and respect.

TRACIE HILL
Houma, Louisiana

SUMMER'S LESSONS

The idea that summer months are a "waste" (Upfront, September), is far from the truth. The summer was my time to play ball, socialize, explore the woods, learn to swim, go to camp, horseback ride for the first time, get summer jobs, appear in a YMCA musical, and paint grandma's lawn chairs and porch. Summer months out of the classroom rounded out my education and helped me become a whole person. Now, as a teacher of 30 years, my summers are still providing some of my best learning experiences.

BILL CALORE
Hollywood, Florida

CARTOON: KEVIN SIERS

MEMBER IN THE NEWS

"OUR POSITION IS you can believe whatever you want."

—PORTLAND, MAINE, SCIENCE TEACHER GARRY FOX ON INTELLIGENT DESIGN AND EVOLUTION, Portland Press Herald, *September 19, 2005. However, personal belief does not excuse his students from learning about evolution, Fox continued.*

"I'M LOOKING FORWARD to more meat in that next contract. This one was barely adequate, just enough to cover it so we don't have to strike."

—ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER JANIE KLUEBER, Anchorage Daily News, *September 20, 2005. Teachers there won a one-year contract after a threatened walkout compelled the district to abandon its pursuit of a three-year deal.*

CORRECTIONS: *NEA Today* erred in reporting U.S. Rep. Dave Camp's home state ("Capital Report," October). It is Michigan. Also, last month's, "Find It on Freebay," (People) contained an incorrect address for the Freebay Web site. It is www.freebayforus.org.

Editor's note: In October's Upfront section, we referenced a study done by David Figlio of the University of Florida that shows a correlation between the achievement gap and children's White- or Black-sounding names. For more information, see Figlio's Web site at http://bear.cba.ufl.edu/figlio/.

LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways:

BY MAIL: Write to TalkBack, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036

THROUGH THE WEB: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday, click on "Contact the Editor," and fill in the "Letter to the Editor" section.

BY E-MAIL: Write to neatoday@nea.org

BY FAX: 202-822-7206

Letters are edited for length and clarity.

upfront

Trends
Facts
Innovators
Wisdom
Research
First 5
News
Quotes
Humor

Terminated Promises

CALIFORNIA HAS MONEY, BUT NOT FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

CALIFORNIA is a trend-setter, so it's bad news for all Americans that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger didn't learn an important rule taught in kindergarten: Keep your promises.

Or a more grown-up rule: Don't break the law.

But educators are fiercely campaigning to teach him those lessons—better late than never. The promise was to restore the billions of dollars he "borrowed" from public schools in 2004 to close a gaping budget deficit. That money was guaranteed by a public ballot, but Gov. Schwarzenegger struck an agreement with the education community to borrow the cash and pay it back when state revenues picked up.

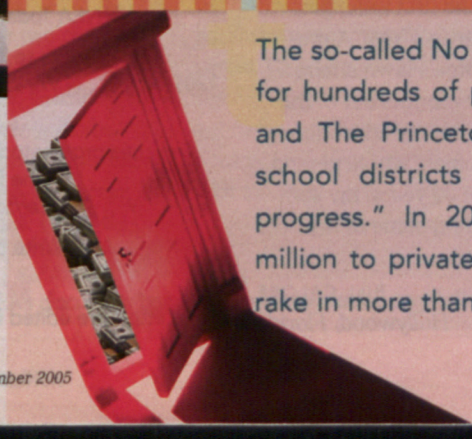
Now, state revenues are up. But the governor won't pay.

The schools are out $3.1 billion. How much is that? Enough to "keep 100 schools open that are slated to be closed, save class size reduction in all K–3 programs and extend that program to the fourth grade, [and] provide twice as much professional development for teachers," according to state schools chief Jack O'Connell, who has joined the California Teachers Association (CTA) and parents in a lawsuit to get the money back.

Schwarzenegger, meanwhile, is sponsoring a voter initiative that would let him off the hook permanently.

CTA's 800-member governing body has voted for a special levy of $60 per member for the campaign, because sometimes it's expensive to teach kindergarten rules to grown-ups.

NO PROFIT LEFT BEHIND



The so-called No Child Left Behind law has opened the door for hundreds of private tutorial companies, such as Kaplan and The Princeton Review, to earn federal tax dollars in school districts that failed to make "adequate yearly progress." In 2003, those districts funneled about $300 million to private tutors; but this year, they're expected to rake in more than $900 million.

PHOTOS TOP: CALVIN KNIGHT; BOTTOM: STEVE COLE

Waste not

At Thanksgiving, tables are heaped with turkey and dressing, while garbage bags are stuffed with the leftovers—and we don't mean the makings of sandwiches, but rather the boxes, bags, and other packaging of a great meal.

NOW IMAGINE how much waste is tossed out after the daily banquet in your school cafeteria! On average, each student produces a whopping 45 to 90 pounds of disposable lunch waste a year.

With those totals in mind, teachers all over are teaching green lessons during lunchtime, sometimes with the help of activists at www.wastefreelunches.org. At Marvista Elementary in Normandy Park, Washington, Michelle Baca's students have packed their pb&j's in recyclable foil and carried their chips in reusable plastic containers on "waste-free Wednesdays." Leftovers were fed to the classroom worms, and used milk containers were rinsed out and saved for art and science projects. "Parents got the hang of it," Baca says. "We had no garbage!" For that, perhaps, we should be thankful.

2 **[STATISTIC]**
The **PERCENTAGE** of **YOUNG TEACHERS** who say they'd take the same career path again.

UPFRONT ON HURRICANES

KATRINA'S AND RITA'S VICTIMS

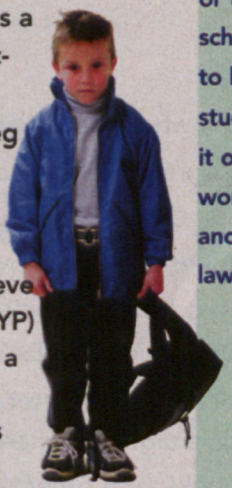
Will feds let schools focus on helping?

Caring for Hurricane Katrina's and Rita's youngest victims is a complex and difficult task—but so is complying with the strictures of the so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB).

In order to let schools focus on the first, NEA President Reg Weaver is urging federal officials to let up on the second.

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said she would do that, but more flexibility is still needed. Schools greatly damaged or closed by the hurricanes will get a one-year reprieve from sanctions for failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) rules. And schools that took in evacuated children can request a waiver to remove their scores from AYP tabulations. To date, however, Spellings has failed to extend "highly qualified" rules for teachers and paraprofessionals displaced by the storm.

Meanwhile, the Administration has moved quickly with its conservative priorities—like a voucher plan to use federal tax money to educate Katrina evacuees in private schools.



Notepad

Push me, please

Think high school students are content to coast through their day? Not according to them. A majority of more than 10,000 teens polled by the National Governors Association said they find their workloads about as challenging as keeping their iPod playlists current.

In the survey of 16- to 18-year-olds, fewer than 1 in 10 said school had been very hard. More than one-third said it was a cinch, and nearly the same number said they would work harder if classes were more challenging. And the talked-about "senior slide"? Nearly half of seniors said their final year of high school could be more meaningful and more courses relevant to their future would be the best way to improve it.

That's nothing new to NEA, whose high school reform plan, "A Springboard for Lifetime Success," calls for more courses that relate to students' futures in college, vocational schools, or the workforce. Giving schools the money they need to bolster these offerings for students, rather than spending it on bureaucracy and paperwork, is the challenge for another group entirely: federal lawmakers.

Have a great idea?

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PHOTOS TOP: C SQUARED STUDIOS; BOTTOM BOY: STOCKBYTE; BOTTOM HURRICANE: PHOTODISC

Fear and Downloading

It's bad enough to be pushed on the playground. Now victims of bullies also can be chased through the Internet—with malicious messages, humiliating homepages, and other technological taunts. Called "cyberbullies," these new high-tech tormentors use information technology to deliberately harass, threaten, or intimidate, and they represent a growing problem among youth worldwide.

We want you to share your experiences with cyberbullying with us, and also your solutions. Please send us an e-mail at neatoday-reply@list.nea.org. In the meantime, some strategies for the classroom include these actions:

- > **TALK ABOUT** cyberbullying with your students and ask for ideas on prevention.
- > **MANY KIDS** think they're anonymous while in cyberspace—let them know they aren't invisible and that "cyber-footprints" can be tracked.
- > **BE CLEAR** about the consequences of cyberbullying.
- > **READ MORE** at www.bullyonline.org, www.cyberbully.org, or www.stopcyberbullying.org.

[STATISTIC]
2
The average **NUMBER** of **TELEVISIONS** in American households with children.

GIVE IT A GRADE

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Did you drop your popcorn when the dragon spit fire? Did you hold your breath during the Triwizard Tournament? (And isn't that Cedric Diggory a good-looking boy?) Your colleagues want to know—just how good is the new movie, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*? Share your opinion at NEA's new interactive Web-based feature, called Give It a Grade, at www.nea.org/giveitagrade, where you can rate Web sites, movies, books, and other products and find out whether your colleagues feel the same way.

PHOTOS TOP: SW PRODUCTIONS; CARD PHOTO: BRAND X PICTURES

HITTING THE ROAD

BUSTING UP PRIVATIZATION

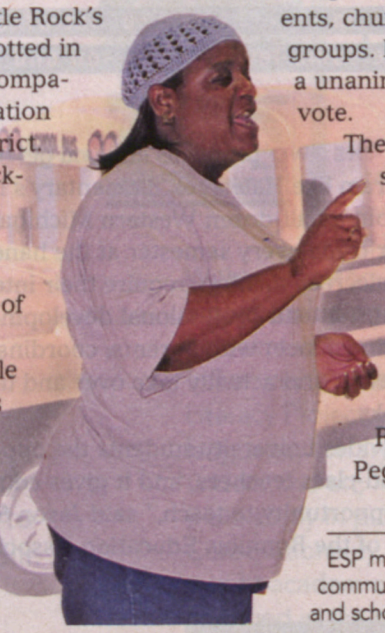
DON'T PLAN ON GETTING SICK. Ever.

No sick leave was just one of the many problems that North Little Rock's bus drivers and mechanics spotted in the dismal bids from private companies hoping to snag transportation services in their Arkansas district.

Other lowlights included lackluster retirement savings plans and drastically reduced health insurance, as well as proposals that would have cut the quality of service provided to students. Drivers who fell behind schedule while waiting a few minutes for late students would have been docked pay, and aides on special education buses were up for grabs.

With only a month to campaign, education support professionals did what they do best—hit the road. Aided by the North Little Rock CTA and the state Association, drivers and mechanics spoke out against privatization to parents, churches, and civic groups. Last spring, they won a unanimous school board vote.

Their road map to victory started with NEA, which provides a strategy guide to stopping privatization, available at local UniServ offices. "We just worked it!" says proud North Little Rock UniServ Director Peggy Nabors.



ESP members made their case at community meetings with parents and school officials.

Raising the Stakes

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS ACROSS THE NATION ARE FLUSH WITH POKER FEVER.

A report from the Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth reveals the rate of card playing for cash has jumped dramatically among young men. In 2004, 11.4 percent of male students said they hold 'em and fold 'em at least once a week—an 84 percent leap in one year.

Their interest in eight-card stud follows a national proliferation of poker-themed television programs and the rise of Internet gambling. But while it seems like fun and games, more poker can lead to over-spending and addiction. About 10 percent of teens have gambling problems, Harvard University researchers say.

To throw down the cards safely, consider having students form school clubs that emphasize the strategy involved—in a safe environment.

—DANIEL MOISE

Global Takes

Mountains of Debt

Even as industrialized nations move closer toward cancelling the debts of the world's poorest countries, the world's largest education union has called for greater generosity and accountability.

Education International (EI), of which NEA is a member, says that some needy countries have been left out of the plans, and others will be hard-pressed to meet the conditions of cancellation. Moreover, it's no sure thing that the money once used to pay debt will be directed toward education or health.

Across the globe, EI encourages teachers to press their governments to make sure the freed-up money is used to help achieve education for all, and to ensure teachers' unions will be involved in the process.

Oui, oui!

Furious French educators are pushing parliament to roll back a new law that mandates teaching a "positive" view of French colonialism in North Africa. The drive includes a petition signed by 1,001 intellectuals, many saying it's fine to teach about the hospitals the French built, but don't forget the massacres and torture.

Have a great idea?

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> Send it by e-mail:
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Learning to Teach

For new teachers, making the transition from student to teacher often isn't easy. For veterans, it's difficult to maintain the same level of passion and interest after years in the classroom.

COMBINE THE TWO problems and you get one solution—a mentorship program like Halecreek Elementary's in Romulus, Michigan, where about a half-dozen Western Michigan University students learn their trade every semester at the hands of the pros.

The Halecreek mentors require their interns to help develop lesson plans; attend professional development and after-school staff meetings; meet with parents; coordinate service projects with students; and actually take over and teach for a minimum of three weeks.

"It provides university students the opportunity to learn from world-class teachers, and it gives educators another opportunity to teach," said Jason Salhaney, president of the Romulus Education Association.

TRADE SECRETS

The skills you use on the job can help another member with a dilemma on the home front.

▶ **THIS MONTH:** Cafeteria worker Debra Sperry of Pueblo, Colorado, dishes up the best ways to feed the masses during the holiday season.

Fine Dining

BE PREPARED. Set your table the night before the big meal, making sure you have enough placemats, plates, dinnerware, and festive decorations. Make placecards to avoid the same awkward jockeying for seats that goes on in your cafeteria.

BAG AND FLIP. Cook turkey in a roasting bag to keep it from drying out—crucial to cooking a big bird for a big brigade. Also, flip the bird. (Not to your mother-in-law!) Turn the turkey upside down because broth keeps the breast moist. In general, a 16- to 20-pound bird serves 24 guests and takes four to five hours to cook. For 30 guests opt for a 20- to 24-pound bird, and roast for five to six-and-a-half hours.

COOK AHEAD OF TIME. Make mashed potatoes as much as two hours early and keep them in a slow cooker on low for one to two hours, stirring occasionally. You also can cube your spuds the day before and keep them covered with water in the refrigerator. On the big day just add fresh water to the pot and boil. Veggies are easily tackled the day before too—clean and chop, then store in sealed bags in the fridge. If your veggies will go on a nibble tray, add a wet cloth to the bag. Refrigerated rolls can be shaped, covered, and chilled up to two hours before baking.

PHOTO TURKEY: LISA PEARDON

GOT A TIP TO SHARE?

We're looking for high school debate teachers or coaches to advise fellow members on how to **speak publicly with confidence.** If you'd like to be considered, e-mail **clong@nea.org** with your name and local, a brief description of what you do, and your top three tips.

TELL US MORE

LOUNGING AROUND

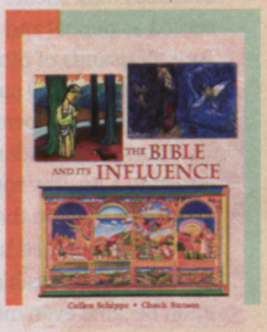
Does your teachers' lounge have a special chair to rest your weary bones? Is it decorated like the inside of the *Enterprise*? Who's still hiding shag carpet and vinyl tables?

We want to hear about the special touches that make your lounge unique and wonderful, and a great place to hang out and laugh, cry, and share. Tell us about them, please, at neatoday-reply@list.nea.org.

3 [STATISTIC]

The **MILLIONS** of World War II **VETERANS** sent to college with the first GI Bill.

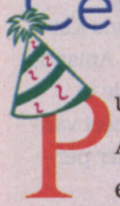
BOOK FOCUS



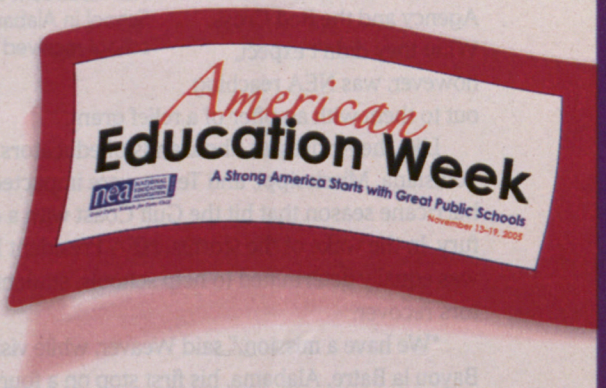
To the Land of Milk and Honey

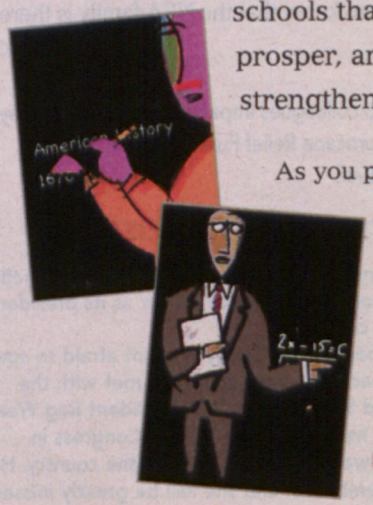
IN HIS LETTERS, John Steinbeck wrote that there is one story in the world, "and only one," of humans caught in a net of hunger and ambition, good and evil—and that is the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, the basis of his powerful 1952 novel *East of Eden*. Within that story can be found a half-dozen or more archetypal plot motifs, including the classic detective's tale or the story of the innocent victim, suggests a new textbook, *The Bible and Its Influence*, released in September. The book, produced by the Bible Literacy Project, aims to familiarize high school students with biblical language, literary forms, plot lines, and characters so they can better understand art, literature, and culture. It's a touchy topic, isn't it? Bible study in public schools immediately raises questions of Constitutionality, but organizers have a ready answer. If the Bible is taught academically, "not devotionally," and if the students aren't engaged in the practice of religion, then it's all kosher, so to speak. For more information, see www.bibleliteracy.org.

Celebrate Public Schools



Put on your party hat, pin up your poster, and kick-off American Education Week on November 14 with parents, community members, and all members of your school's staff. This year's theme, "A Strong America Starts with Great Public Schools," reflects NEA's vision for public schools that help students to grow, prosper, and achieve, and in turn, strengthen America.





As you plan this year's celebration, rely on NEA's online toolkit, which includes great activity ideas, resources, templates, and downloadable materials, including an AEW poster available in both English and Spanish, at **www.nea.org/aew**. Plan something fresh for every day, including:

NOVEMBER 15: Invite Parents to School Day.

NOVEMBER 16: Education Support Professionals Day.

NOVEMBER 17: Teacher for a Day.

NOVEMBER 18: Substitute Educators Day.

PHOTO SOFA: STEPHEN FOSTER

A Storm of Support

In the wake of a violent hurricane season, NEA members find that the Association provides support in unexpected ways.

Ashley and Amanda Andress, a young couple from Mobile, Alabama, both joined NEA because of the protections and benefits the Association would provide to them as educators. They had no idea those benefits would someday include disaster relief.

Hurricane Katrina left the couple, their 18-month-old son, and three-month-old daughter homeless after a canal, fed by Mobile Bay, deluged their home. With their house uninhabitable and skyrocketing rental fees unaffordable, the couple bounced between family members as they struggled to figure out their next move. They knew they could rely on some form of assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross. What they didn't expect, however, was NEA reaching out to them with an offer of a relief grant.

NEA President **Reg Weaver** visits with students of Alba Middle School in Alabama, which was flooded after Hurricane Katrina. The school received $2,500 from NEA to help with clean-up costs.

Like the Andresses, thousands of educators in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas were impacted by an intense hurricane season that hit the Gulf Coast with a determined fury. In the wake of the storms, NEA President Reg Weaver was equally determined to help schools, students, and educators recover.

"We have a mission," said Weaver, while visiting a school in Bayou la Batre, Alabama, his first stop on a four-state trip to distribute $500,000 for hurricane relief efforts. Weaver presented checks to NEA affiliates in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas that will help with the clean-up of affected schools and help displaced students buy school supplies, textbooks, and, in some cases, clothes.

"These children need a sense of security and a safe place to call home," Weaver said. "School is an important way to help fulfill those needs. We can't let ourselves be complacent when it comes to educating these students. It's vital to their health and well-being that they attend great public schools and continue their learning."

The turbulent 2005 hurricane season served as a powerful reminder of the important role the nation's schools play in times of crisis. As the storms approached, tens of thousands of evacuees took shelter in schools. Some schools in the region served as depots and distribution centers for relief supplies. And thousands of other schools throughout the country enrolled evacuated students, providing them with a much-needed sense of normalcy.

Along with students, school also provides educators with a return to a healthy routine, allowing them to focus on educating rather than on the disaster. For those who lived in areas flooded or flattened by the storms, however, a speedy return to school was impossible. That's when membership in the Association became even more valuable.

"I feel that the [hurricanes] have shown us that membership in NEA is more relevant today than it has ever been," said Weaver. "We have the interest of educators and students in the disaster zone very close at heart, and we are doing everything we can to allow them to recover and return to normalcy as quickly as possible."

As part of its pledge to support those impacted by the hurricanes, NEA is raising $1 million in relief funds for state and local affiliates. NEA also established a toll-free helpline number for schools, teachers, and school employees to apply for assistance. Public school employees personally impacted by Hurricane Katrina, like Ashley and Amanda Andress, were eligible to apply for grants to meet various needs, including housing, food, clothing, and other personal needs.

The Andresses said it's humbling to be in a position of needing help. "I would never have taken a handout before—I was usually the one offering a helping hand," said Amanda. "But it's so reassuring to know that the NEA family is there, and that they care."

—CINDY LONG

Pledge your support to colleagues impacted by the disaster by donating to the NEA Hurricane Relief Fund. Find out how at www.nea.org/disasterrelief.

PUBLIC EDUCATION LOSES A FRIEND

Sandra Feldman, a former second-grade teacher who propelled the American Federation of Teachers to power as its president, died September 18 of cancer.

"Despite humble beginnings, Sandy was not afraid to speak up for students and teachers—even when she met with the President of the United States," said NEA President Reg Weaver. "Her strong voice was heard from the halls of Congress in Washington to the hallways of schools all over the country. Her work will be long remembered, and she will be greatly missed."

PHOTO: ALEC THIGPEN

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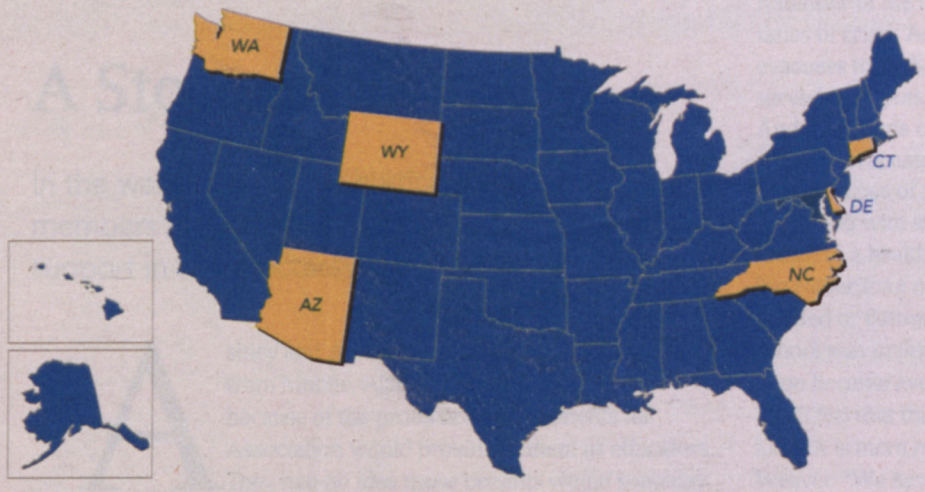

Leading the Way

CONNECTICUT became the first state to file suit against the federal government over the so-called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, claiming that the Bush Administration had not provided enough money to pay for new testing and programs. The federal government gave Connecticut $5.8 million this year, but state officials say another $41.6 million is needed by 2008 to comply with the law, which, by the way, states the federal government must pay for the rules and regulations it is imposing on public schools. The **Connecticut Education Association (CEA)** also declared that state and local funds cannot be used to meet the goals of the 2001 act. More than 42 Connecticut school districts back the state's lawsuit. Since the law's enactment in 2002, there has been a $27 billion funding shortfall in what Congress was supposed to provide schools.

Something in the Water

WASHINGTON contract negotiators are on a roll with at least eight recent victories. The **Bellingham Education Association** and **Mount Vernon Education Association** each ratified contracts that include average salary increases of 1.85 percent for each of the next two years, plus the state COLA for each of two years. The **Peninsula Education Association** agreed on a contract containing more paid days annually and fewer restrictions on what teachers can do during that time. Association bargaining teams were also successful in Bethel, Clover Park, Oak Harbor, Snoqualmie, and Tacoma, among others.

New Track Records

WYOMING A new data tracking system in Wyoming that collects education statistics and student records could help manage the way NCLB requirements are reported. The **Wyoming Education Association (WEA)** is working with government and private industry sources to further develop a data warehousing system that will enable the quick transfer of student files among departments as well as districts. "As a student transfers from within the state, their records will transfer electronically in a consistent format," says WEA President Gary McDowell. "A student's performance and assessments will be tracked more efficiently." Student grades, for example, will be entered in the system only once, then transferred electronically.

Measuring Progress

ARIZONA Enforcement of adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards could affect more than 150 schools. Arizona schools had been asked by the U.S. Department of Education to include AIMS test scores from students just learning English when calculating AYP measurements. Schools that fail to meet standards four years in a row could be ordered to replace teachers and principals. John Wright, **Arizona Education Association (AEA)** president, says the Association has helped place members on a statewide work group that includes government and school district officials.

"We can't undo the federal formula," Wright says. "We can work with teachers and school districts to develop non-threatening peer support recommendations." In response to AEA's efforts, federal authorities recently agreed to omit the scores of Arizona students in their first three years of learning English.

Certifiably Number One

NORTH CAROLINA More than 500 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) from across the state attended a summit recently to discuss how to increase the supply of quality teachers. Sponsored in part by the **North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE),** recommendations were sent to state legislators, school boards, and administrators to help recruit and retain teachers.

"Providing our state's neediest children with an adequate supply of well-prepared teachers is critical to closing the achievement gap," says NCAE President Eddie Davis. "Research tells us that the consequences are profoundly negative when students in high-needs schools are deprived of effective teachers."

Ties that Bind

DELAWARE Thanks to a binding arbitration law, the **Lake Forest Education Association (LFEA)** gained binding arbitration recently for all members of the bargaining unit and negotiates one contract that covers teachers, specialists, child nutrition workers, secretaries, paras, and custodians. In recent negotiations, LFEA gained a 100 percent salary increase for paras, a tuition reimbursement increase of $20,000 (to $85,000), and a payoff for unused sick days for retirees (from $10 to $30 per day) among other gains. The **Delaware State Education Association (DSEA),** after 10 years of work with legislators, helped usher in Delaware's binding arbitration law in 2003, which requires public employers and unions to negotiate binding grievance arbitration language for their successor contract if it does not yet include such language.

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Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
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Hey Teachers—Get Certified!

$700,000 Scholarship Program

The Foundation and the National Education Association believe that pre-K through 12 curriculum should be taught by licensed teachers. We recognize that in certain urban, suburban, and rural communities not every teacher is licensed. In an effort to help teachers become fully licensed, the Foundation and NEA have agreed to join forces to assist teachers who desire to gain full licensure.

The Foundation and NEA are offering financial assistance in the following areas:

- Tuition for specified courses
- Books
- Support for preparing to take a state teacher licensure examination

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To be eligible for this program you must be currently employed as a teacher in a K-12 public school, or currently enrolled in an accredited school of education and have completed course work for licensure. Scholarship winners must commit to teach a minimum of three years in identified communities, to be locally determined.

Scholarships will be made through Historically Black Colleges and Universities in selected areas throughout the United States. If you are interested in participating in this program, please go to **www.nea.org/joyner** and fill out the attached short questionnaire, and we will determine your eligibility and an appropriate local HBCU for you to work through.

www.nea.org/joyner

Call this ESP 'Mr. VP'

Idaho custodian Marty Meyer gets active in his Association and reaches new heights.

When Marty Meyer told a school district official that he was running for vice president of the Idaho Education Association (IEA), the official was taken aback.

"He told me he couldn't believe that the IEA would elect a custodian as VP," says Meyer, head custodian at Fernan Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. "I said that they were not electing a custodian as VP. They were electing me, as a person."

The person Meyer has become since joining IEA in 1989 is different from the one who worked as a pipe fitter on a Texas nuclear power plant in the early 1970s. That person just punched a clock.

And, Meyer is no longer the construction worker he was in the late 1970s who grew frustrated with the frequent layoffs and lack of health and retirement benefits. That job too lacked purpose.

Even his school job appeared to be routine at first. "I started working with schools because the district offered benefits for my growing family," says Meyer, who had three children when he started custodial work in 1981. "Then I got involved with the Association and learned about all this opportunity to stretch and grow as a person. It changed me."

In 1993, Meyer began to spread his activist wings by joining the Coeur d'Alene Education Association insurance committee. He also started attending state conferences and recruiting new members. Eventually he joined the IEA Government Relations/Political Action Committee for Education.

"In a non-bargaining state [for ESPs], I was able to be an advocate for education support professionals," he says.

After attending his first national NEA ESP conference in 1999, his aspirations began to soar even higher. Soon he was testifying before the Idaho legislature on behalf of ESPs, lobbying legislators on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and working on political campaigns.

"It's hard to have a bad day at work with the kids saying your name all day," says IEA Vice President and custodian **Marty Meyer**.

Meyer's ambition to help others was also sparked by the joy he found interacting with students.

"It's hard to have a bad day at work with the kids saying your name all day," he says. "Over the years, I get the opportunity to watch them unfold into great human beings."

Back at school he continues to manage the grounds of Fernan, while organizing parent groups to support community causes and playing guitar at assemblies and in classrooms.

"In everything I do, I like to get people involved," says Meyer. "I think of my job as providing a place where learning can occur."

Meyer's enthusiasm has not gone unnoticed by Association leaders.

"He brings a voice to our Association that we lacked," says IEA President Sherri Wood. "When he comes to a meeting you can be sure that he has done his homework."

After Meyer was named NEA ESP of the Year in 2003, NEA President Reg Weaver said that Meyer's job didn't "begin nor end at the schoolhouse door. Whether he's challenging—and educating—public education's foes, Marty's giving it his all."

Even with these accolades, to win the VP's office Meyer had to count on the support of teachers, who comprise 90 percent of IEA's almost 12,000 members. Meyer campaigned in most of IEA's nine regions, even though he ran unopposed.

"I expected an opponent," Meyer says. "I still had to address issues regarding my qualifications, experience, and motivation."

Meyer won the election last June. Along with serving a three-year term, he chairs the budget committee, which is responsible for the Association's $4 million budget.

As usual, Meyer has risen to the occasion, acquiring the necessary financial, administrative, and public speaking skills. He insists, however, on keeping his priorities in order.

"I support my president but there are times when you can't get away," he says. "Schools are busy places. I was hired to do a job and I better do it."

—JOHN ROSALES

More ESP stories in this issue:

> **Arkansas ESPs take their anti-privatization message on the road—and win** – *Page 13*

> **Delaware ESPs combine forces and make compensation gains** – *Page 18*

PHOTO: JESSE TINSLEY

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1. HOW TO ENTER: Individual students in grades 5-12 as of 9/5/05 may enter the contest by writing and submitting an original essay supporting their choice of an important person that had a significant impact on society, between 1/01/05 through 11/20/05 and therefore, should be selected for Biography® Of The Year 2005. The essay must explain whether the impact was positive or negative on society. Essay must be legible and is limited to 300 words or less (including I, a, etc.). Each entry must include the student's name, complete address, zip code, telephone number, age, grade, essay word count, parent or legal guardian's name, name of teacher, school, school address, and local cable system (if known). Students may send entries to: BIOGRAPHY OF THE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE, P.O. Box 7267, Melville, NY 11775-7267. Students may enter as often as they wish, but each entry must be a different essay about a different person and mailed in a separate postage-paid envelope. A teacher may submit multiple student entries in bulk, as long as each individual entry contains the required information. Contest ends: 11/20/05 and entries must be received no later than 11/30/05. Mechanically reproduced entries are void.

2. PRIZES: There will be two grade level prize tiers: 5th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade. One Grand Prize winner and One First Prize winner will be selected for the 5th-8th grade level and one Grand Prize winner and one First Prize winner will be selected for the 9th-12th grade level. Each student winner receives a prize, along with his/her teacher and school.

5th-8th Grade level
GRAND PRIZE (1): Student: $5,000 (awarded in the form of a check)
Teacher: $500 grant to use for Classroom Activities (awarded in the form of a check)
School: A&E Television DVD Library (At least 8 hours in length; Est. Retail Value: $200)
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School: A&E Television DVD Library (At least 8 hours in length; Est. Retail Value: $200)

9th-12th Grade level
GRAND PRIZE (1): Student: $5,000 (awarded in the form of a check)
Teacher: $500 grant to use for Classroom Activities (awarded in the form of a check)
School: A&E Television DVD Library (At least 8 hours in length; Est. Retail Value: $200)
FIRST PRIZE (1): Student: $2,500 (awarded in the form of a check)
Teacher: $250 grant to use for Classroom Activities (awarded in the form of a check)
School: A&E Television DVD Library (At least 8 hours in length; Est. Retail Value: $200)

Entries will be judged based on the following criteria: Persuasiveness (1/3), Creativity (1/3), Suitability (1/3). Essays that contain more than 300 words and/or are not legible are not eligible. Winners will be selected by a panel of educators selected by Sponsor whose decisions are final on all matters relating to this contest. In the event of a tie, tied entries will be re-judged based solely on creativity. All Prizes will be awarded. Winners will be notified by overnight mail by 1/4/06. All Prizes are not transferable; no substitutions are allowed, except by the sponsor who reserves the right to award a prize of equal or greater value if advertised prize is unavailable. Student prizes will be awarded in the name of a parent or legal guardian. All parent/legal guardians of student winners will be required to execute and return an affidavit of eligibility, authenticity, liability/publicity release and assignment of rights within 10 days of notification attempt or the prize will be forfeited and an alternate winner determined. Corresponding winning teachers will be required to complete a prize acceptance form prior to prize award after winning students are notified. Taxes, if any, related to the prize are the responsibility of the individual winners. No responsibility or liability is assumed for damages, losses or injury resulting from acceptance or use of any prize.

3. All entries must be the sole, original work of the entrant. Judges may disqualify previously published essays, those that have won previous awards or competitions or those that are deemed lewd or offensive. Entries become the property of A&E Television Networks and will not be acknowledged or returned. Entrants/winners acknowledge and agree that their entries become the property of A&E Television Networks, which thereby has the right to edit, adapt, modify, reproduce, publish, promote and otherwise use entries in any way it sees fit. Acceptance of prize by winners and prize recipients constitutes permission to use the winners' and prize recipients' names and likenesses without further compensation, except where prohibited by law. No responsibility is assumed for lost, misdirected, illegible, damaged, postage due or late entries or mail. No information regarding entries or judging will be disclosed.

4. ELIGIBILITY: The contest is open to students in grades 5-12, as of 9/5/05, who are legal residents of the U.S. (not including Puerto Rico), except employees and their families of A&E Television Networks, their parent companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertiser and promotion agencies, public relations agencies and Doe Jarvela Associates, Inc. This offer is void in Puerto Rico and wherever prohibited and subject to all federal, state and local laws. 5. WINNERS: For a list of winners, available after 2/16/06, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope by 3/4/06 to: BIOGRAPHY OF THE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE, P.O. Box 7998, Melville, NY 11775-7336. 6. SPONSOR: The sponsor of this promotion is A&E Television Networks, New York, NY.

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Into Africa

Where a dollar makes a big difference, NEA is investing in Third World organizing.

Months after his journey into the heart of Africa, New Jersey guidance counselor Earl Kights still feels the peace of the place. Even as he makes his way among Camden's most troubled teens, he carries with him a sense of tranquility—a feeling he finally found his home.

But oh, if a man's home is his castle, the Congo is a palace for the heart. With its dirt floors and punishing roads, it's too tough on the body and not so easy on the mind either. If you want to get or provide an education, well, good luck to you.

"Truly, if educators have to be dedicated, they have to be dedicated there," says Kights, who visited the Republic of Congo last spring to check on its organizing campaign.

In the Congo:

Illiteracy rate: **18 percent**
Number of pupils per teacher: **60**
Percentage of university students who are women: **25**

Since 2003, NEA has been helping our Congolese partners to recruit new members and improve the working conditions of teachers there. So far, at a cost of about $30,000, which has been matched by the French Education Union, NEA has printed recruitment brochures and provided leaders with cell phones. Still, it's not an easy task. How do you organize folks unreachable by phone or mail? How do you ask for dues when local history makes everybody fear corruption?

There are countless discouragements for educators in the developing world and yet, NEA's small investments abroad can help transform their workplaces, says Jill Christianson of NEA International Relations, who traveled with Kights.

To that end, NEA has been involved in a handful of projects around the world, including human rights education in Colombia and teacher training in West Africa, and remains a leading member of Education International, an association that represents more than 29 million education professionals worldwide.

In the Congo, the need is obvious. Teachers haven't had a pay raise in 15 years—"and they don't know from paycheck to paycheck if they're going to get paid at all," says Kights. Forget about books. But keep an eye on the weather because you're teaching virtually outdoors. "Many schools have no electricity, no sanitation, and certainly no running water," says Christianson.

Earl Kights (in glasses) visits with new friends in the Congo, where NEA is helping our colleagues recruit and organize.

Students sit at benches—sometimes sans desks. Without options, teachers lecture from the chalkboard, which frequently is so ancient that the chalk just flakes off.

Teacher training? Ha.

And yet, Kights found his Congolese colleagues to be "energetic, hopeful.... I saw the dedication there." And they're making inroads, he points out. The local union has signed up almost 1,000 members, and begun talking to national officials about training and organizing. (Between 8,000 and 12,000 teachers work there.)

During their 10 days of travel, Kights, Christianson, and our French partners traveled from Brazzaville, the republic's capital city, into the verdant mountains, meeting with Education Ministry captains and local union officials. Almost all were men, though teachers are mostly women.

In each location, the team visited classrooms. In the village of Djambala, to have a little fun, kids turn cans into cars and push them down the dirt street with sticks—"I haven't seen that for 40 years," says Kights. Everywhere, the Congolese are very serious about their schoolwork. At the same time, they wear Western-style clothes, are fluent users of e-mail, and love modern music.

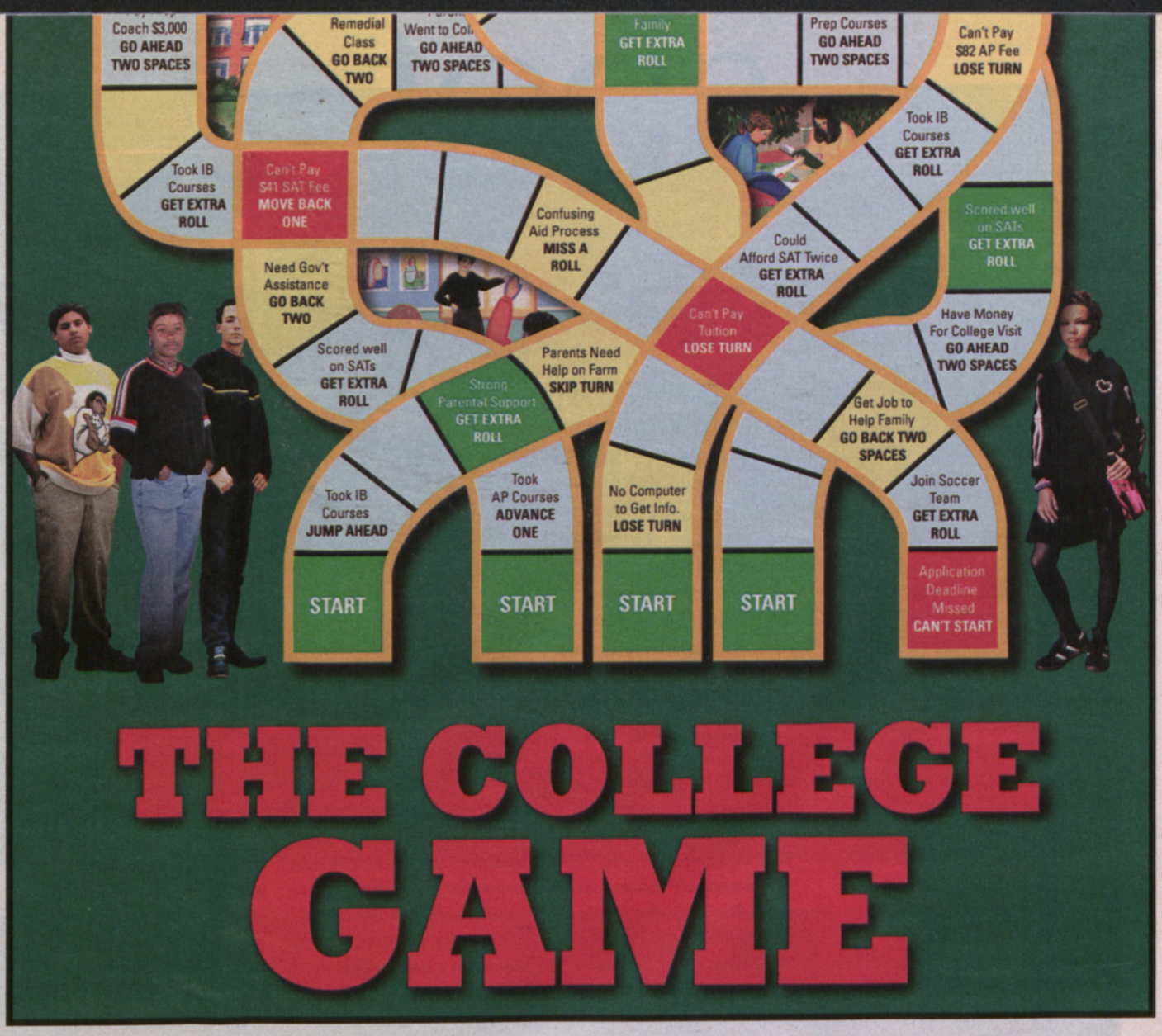
When Kights left, "a part of me stayed in the Congo."

"Even today, I can close my eyes and go back," says Kights. "If nothing else, it put a much clearer perspective on life for me, to know as an individual just how truly blessed I am. I am blessed."

—MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

For more on NEA International Relations, see www.nea.org/international/index.html. Visit Education International's Web site at www.ei-ie.org.

PHOTO: JILL CHRISTIANSON



THE COLLEGE GAME

BY CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

Low-income and minority students often lack basic supports when getting ready for college. Read on for innovative ways NEA members are helping kids navigate the system—and how you can too.

It's a little after 7 a.m. and most Southwest High School students are shaking off the night's sleep, blearily brushing their teeth or pulling on T-shirts. Gray light and a cool fog add to the morning stupor of Nestor, California, located seconds from the U.S.-Mexican border. But in Helene Matthews' brightly lit classroom, 30 juniors and seniors are already chiming into a class discussion about preparing for college. They're brainstorming about the characteristics they'll need for the final years of a rigorous college-prep curriculum.

They sit 2,530 miles from Florida State University. The University of North Carolina is 2,190 miles away. But, for these mostly Hispanic, low-income students, both schools might as well be on the moon.

These students aren't in Matthews' college admission prep class an hour before school starts because getting into college will be easy. They're here because for many minority and low-income students, no matter how smart, talented, or ambitious, getting into college can be a capricious and arduous game—and they're often at the losing end.

"I'm not doing any favors by letting them slide" through high school, Matthews says. "I don't allow students to wimp out."

At the nation's four-year colleges, Blacks and Hispanics make up only 17 percent of the undergraduate population even though they represent 31 percent of the national college-age population, according to the National Association of College Admission Counseling. At those same institutions, low-income students enroll at half the rate of similarly qualified high-income peers, according to a congressional committee studying student financial aid.

ART THIS PAGE: GROFF CREATIVE; PHOTOS OPPOSITE: DAVE GATLEY

They are disturbing numbers made even worse when you put faces on them. Take Robert Pillars, 17, a Southwest High student enrolled in three Advanced Placement classes, who plays football, runs track, and dreams of attending Florida State. Sure, he sounds like a shoo-in—but the odds are against him.

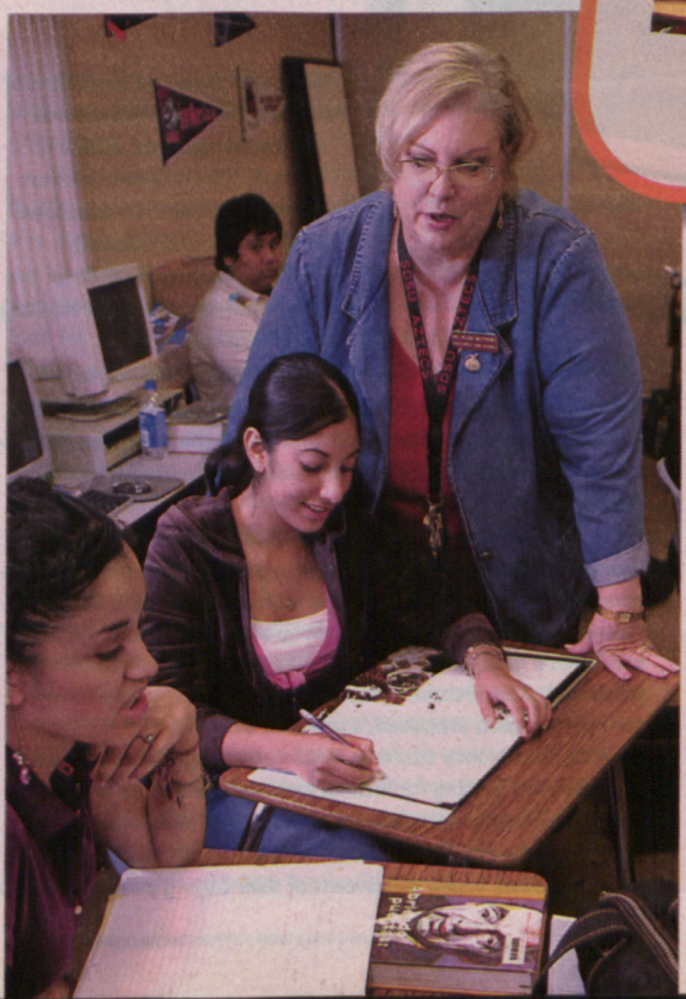
"It's not 'How much can I afford to pay?' It's that I can't pay anything," he says.

And yet, the problems aren't insurmountable. Just as the K–12 achievement gap concerns all educators and closing it is a key NEA initiative, so too is tackling the gap in college admissions rates. As Matthews says, looking at her students huddled in work groups around the room that morning, "this is our future sitting here in this classroom."

"A city, a state, a nation begins with these individual students," says Southwest High teacher Pablo Roncoroni, who works with low-income and minority students trying to get into college. "What's going to happen when there are high levels of unemployment, crime, and everything else because these students aren't going to college? If they are educated, it's going to improve all levels of society."

Also, there's the matter of money. Specifically, your money. More college graduates means a more robust economy. A student who leaves college with a bachelor's degree earns about $51,000 each year, according to a 2005 U.S. Census survey. Comparatively, someone holding only a high school diploma earns $28,000. Unemployment among college grads is less than half that of those with no college experience. A college graduate is less likely to need government assistance, and at the same time he or she contributes more to pay for these programs. That means you've got a fellow citizen boosting the nation's resources, not putting more demands on your paycheck.

There's another key way that college graduates help educators. They're more likely to vote. Imagine the possibilities if more of your students left high school for a successful college career, then hit the voting booth to weigh in on candidates who support public education.



California teacher **Helene Matthews** aids college hopefuls in a program for minority and low-income students.

Hurdles to College

For some teens, rules for the college admissions game are fairly simple: Get good grades in college prep classes, score well on the SATs or ACTs, round out your application package with extracurricular activities and glowing recommendation letters, and be prepared to pay a bill that will range from $2,000 to $27,516 depending on where you're headed.

But myriad obstacles can clutter the path from high school to the front gate of a college campus for poor and minority students. They can be massive, say several thousand dollar tuition deficits and lackluster high school courseloads. Or they can be small—

eds Cut Aid
BACK TO START

Dad Opposed To You Leaving
LOSE TURN

Have Money
College Visit
GO AHEAD
WO SPACES

Playing funny with the money

As politicians look for "savings" in financial aid for poor and minority students, NEA members need to eye the bottom line.

Even if low-income and minority students clear the academic hurdles blocking their path to higher education, they must then run what a congressional committee recently dubbed "the student aid gauntlet."

Millions of students who aspire to college are overwhelmed by the financial aid system, the bi-partisan Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance concluded in its 2005 report. Now, a student's financial aid application process is muddled by ambiguous information about the amount of available aid and mountains of application questions, forms, and directives. Committee members want politicians to streamline it as Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education Act this fall.

"You have a lot of detailed work in this process, and parents can't always be involved when you're talking about low-income

a deadline for one application form overlooked by a student working to support his family—but just as fatal to a student's chance of getting into a good college.

Take Precious Barnes, a Charlotte, North Carolina, student who is Black and poor.

Not low-income; no income. Her mother died when Precious was seven and she never knew her father. A string of temporary caretakers and the couple that became her guardians as she entered 10th grade couldn't provide money for college.

"While everyone else was going out, having fun, I was worrying about how I was going to get into college. Then, 'How am I going to pay for college?'" Barnes says.

Poor students don't have the same access to college Web sites, online SAT and ACT schedules, or federal aid and scholarship applications as their peers with home computers. Sure, there might be a computer at the local library, but if they don't have transportation, or if they have to work to bring home money to their family and don't have time to go, it doesn't help.

Nor do poor students have the luxury of test prep courses or professional college admissions coaches—a new cadre of entrepreneurs springing up to help guide affluent students through the rigorous college admissions process. For hundreds or as much as $10,000, these guidance counselors-for-hire offer test preparation, help students select colleges, and guide them through the application process. They'll even let students know how the local nightlife rates. The Independent Education Consultants Association, a trade group that certifies these hired guns, tallies 500 consultants this year, up from 350 last year. Roughly 70 percent of their clients enroll in private colleges, compared with 22 percent of the general population. The average cost? $3,000.

"Our kids can't afford $180 for an SAT prep course or private consultants. They're having to compete with the kids who can."

—MARGARITA PADILLA

"Our kids can't afford $180 for an SAT prep course or private consultants," says Southwest High guidance counselor Margarita Padilla, who alone advises 400 students each year—one-fifth of the entire school. "And with it getting more competitive at [area universities], they're having to compete with the kids

folks," says John Lee, president of JBL Associates, a research firm that tracks students' access to college. "There is concern that low-income folks are dissuaded by that rigor and demand."

What's waiting for them in the way of financial assistance is becoming less and less helpful each year too.

"Over the last four years we've seen stagnation across the board in major student financial aid programs," says David Baime, vice president for governmental relations at the American Association of Community Colleges. "The federal commitment has waned."

It starts with annual threats to well-established federal programs that have a record of success in getting minorities and low-income students ready for college, such as the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and TRIO, a group of programs under one umbrella title that includes Upward Bound. In recent years, both programs have narrowly escaped proposed, significant cuts.

It continues once students reach college age, with lackluster or diminished funding for federal assistance programs such as federal Pell Grants—the largest single source of financial aid for poor students. Pell Grants have remained largely stagnant in recent decades, losing 40 percent of their buying power in today's

PHOTO: RYAN MCVAY

Virginia teacher **Erin McVadon Albright** works in the lab with IB Summer Institute students at Annandale High. The institute introduces students to the rigors of college-prep coursework—before the school year starts.

who can pay to help boost their scores."

While many students' parents may want their children to go to college, not all understand what that entails.

"So many of our parents have not been to college themselves," says teacher Erin McVadon Albright of Annandale High School in Annandale, Virginia, "and a lot of them don't realize college admission requirements are not the same as high school graduation."

At teacher Bruce Rekstad's Washington High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, many of the 2,000 students are low-income American Indians. College is not their priority or even expectation.

"There are so many issues as far as the home life, just getting the students to come to school is our focus," Rekstad, a Native American studies teacher, says.

Teachers broach life after high school, talking about the importance of moving from Washington High to higher education, be it a two- or four-year college or trade study at the nearby vocational college. Their goal this year: get parents more involved in their children's high school education—currently a challenge in a community where alcoholism and unemployment are twin cancers—with the goal of boosting interest in higher education.

"If we can get the parental support, we believe we'll have a better chance of getting these kids on to college," says Rekstad. "We're showing them that if their children want to help their people, which a lot of them say they do, going to college is an excellent way to do it."

At Hunters Lane High School in Nashville, Tennessee, guidance counselor Jamye Merritt sees students every day who should continue their education after high school, but simply can't because of poverty's gnawing demands.

economy. The average Pell Grant payout now is $2,400, which pays for a fraction of one semester's bill at most colleges and universities.

Making matters worse, as fall arrived in Washington, D.C., legislators scrambled to find $7 billion in "savings" through massive cuts to financial assistance programs for college students.

Lawmakers had their eyes on several proposals, including one that would force students to take on adjustable-rate loans, rather than the current requirement that loans be given at fixed rates. With most economists agreeing that interest rates won't stay at their current lows for long, this spells trouble for students.

"It's the students who are going to end up paying for these so-called savings," says higher education lobbyist Nancy O'Brien, one of several NEA representatives fighting for a better deal for students. "All the projections show that students would be paying thousands more."

Even with financial aid, education and economic analysts estimate low-income students still fall roughly $4,000 short between tuition assistance and the actual expense of college, which includes items like room and board, meal plans, and books. This deficit, which college admissions observers dub "last dollars," is increasing every year as colleges and universities raise their rates and assistance gets cut or remains stagnant.

But NEA is fighting to protect and improve the offerings for minority and low-income high school students. For updates on NEA's efforts, visit www.nea.org/lac/highered.

PHOTO LEFT: SANDY SCHAEFFER; RIGHT: DAVE GATLEY

Herself a graduate of a high school program helping minority, low-income students enroll in college, California teacher **Anna Segednicev** now instructs others in the same program at her alma mater.

She says that one of her students, with his aptitude for auto repair, could have easily excelled at a two-year or vocational college.

"He said 'I'm having to pay half the bills at home now,'" Merritt says. "He lived with his father and his father was treating him as a roommate. I would have liked to [see him] really further his education in some manner, but he just wasn't available."

The Cost Just Went Up

While the burden on some students to provide necessary income for their families is growing, so too are the costs of college.

At four-year public institutions last year, tuition and fees jumped nearly 11 percent, according to The College Board, which tracks college expenses annually. It cost the average student $12,000 to attend the local state college for the year. That's half the annual earnings for a low-income family.

"I help the students with their [Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)] and they have $12,000 coming in to a household of five people," says Matthews. "Thirty thousand for college is like, completely out of their minds."

Two-year public institutions saw a nearly 9 percent tuition hike last year. Students at four-year private institutions paid 6 percent more than the year before.

Potential changes on the political horizon are troubling. Students' financial aid application process is already muddled by mountains of application forms, ambiguous instructions, and ever-changing award amounts. Lawmakers' tinkering with the Higher Education Act this year could mean even fewer benefits for applicants who manage to navigate the maze. (See "Playing Funny With the Money," page 26.)

Playing To Win

Despite these barriers, many minority and low-income students are finding their way to campus—with help from their schools.

Great recommendation? Skip ahead!

The difference between your students getting into a state university or a state of inertia could come down to your recommendation letter.

As college admissions have become feverishly competitive, especially at the few dozen colleges that every straight-A student wants to attend, the recommendation letter has become an increasingly important slip of paper. When it seems like every brainiac helps out at Habitat for Humanity and rakes in 2200 on the SAT, your recommendation can distinguish the best and help seal a thick envelope.

The question is, how to write a letter that catches the eye of admissions officers? At Harvard University, a committee will read about 23,000 recommendation letters this fall—and that's just for the early-decision applicants. They rate each letter on a scale of 1 to 6, and their own studies have shown that students with the best letters are more likely to be admitted.

With that in mind, New Jersey teacher Sharon Stokes is serious

PHOTO LEFT: DAN LOFTIN; RIGHT: DAVE GATLEY

At Southwest High School, 90 percent of students are minorities, 45 percent of the students are English-language learners, and most fall below the poverty line. In one class during the first week of school, a teacher must explain to Spanish-speaking freshmen in their native tongue how to move chairs into a circle for group work. On those days, college seems unimaginable.

But last year, 56 percent of the senior class at Southwest High enrolled at a two-year college and another 25 percent made it into a four-year college. It wasn't a fluke.

In 1985, the school became one of the first in the country to offer the Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, program, which helps low-income, minority students prepare for college. Created in 1980 by NEA member Mary Catherine Swanson, a former San Diego teacher, the program focuses on students whose parents did not attend college and who would otherwise be ill-prepared for life on campus.

Teachers and guidance counselors select students who, along with their parents, sign a contract pledging effort.

Students learn everything from the self-confident attitude they'll need to succeed in a demanding college environment to the note-taking and study skills. Teachers hold tutoring sessions for classes and the SAT. They take students on college visits to familiarize them with the environment, and they remind them of crucial deadlines. During the first week of school, teachers remind students so often of an impending SAT application date that it becomes something of a mantra, which students dutifully repeat when prompted.

"We do everything but come the morning of the test and pick them up," jokes Matthews.

Nearly 200 of the 2,000 students at Southwest High are enrolled in the program there, joining those at nearly 1,000 schools nationwide. Students in grades 9–12 take the AVID courses taught by Matthews, Roncoroni, and freshman and sophomore AVID teacher Anna Segednicev, who pepper each day's lessons with encouragement.

"It's not too early to start thinking about the things you need to have for college," Segednicev tells her students, some of whom have been in high school for a grand total of three days. "I know that everyone here in this classroom can go to college."

Segednicev knows what she's talking about. She was a low-

about her letter-writing duty. With 20 to 25 recommendations to write each year, and 99.4 percent of Haddonfield Memorial High School's students heading to four-year colleges, she needs to be. She's also good at it because she follows two guidelines. Be brief—one page at the most—and also very specific about the attributes of the student.

"Most of the time, when I'm really proud of a recommendation, I've clued in right away to that one personality trait that's going to make them a great college student," says Stokes. "I'm doing one now for a girl who is not an A student and never will be, but she never gives up. She'll always raise her hand to answer my questions and, if she doesn't get it right, she'll listen to the kid who does have it right."

Writing an effective recommendation letter can take hours—and during the high season, an oft-requested teacher can spend as much time at her laptop as a football coach on the field. But there's no cash stipend for this duty, and usually not a lot of sympathy from administrators or parents who often consider it part of the job. In Ohio and Wisconsin, teachers brought light to the issue when some ceased their extra-hours letter writing during tense contract negotiations.

To make it easier on themselves, some of your colleagues, like Kevin Kelly at Lexington (Massachusetts) High School, warn students to request their favors in the spring of their junior year. With advance warning, he can draft them during the summer.

Stokes also requires a little help from students. Weeks, even months, before she pens the first "H" for her "Highly recommended" Latin students, she asks them to write something for her: a paragraph explaining why they want her to write that particular recommendation.

The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University also has a few tips for letter-writing teachers:

TELL THE STUDENT how strong a letter you feel you can honestly write for them, and give them a chance to ask somebody else. At Lexington High, Kelly warns his math students: Do not ask if you've ever cheated in my class. Some still try!

LIKE STOKES, ask for information from the student, including having them create a résumé and give you copies of work done in courses.

USE SCHOOL LETTERHEAD that matches your relationship with the student, not your personal stash.

RELY ON YOUR EYEWITNESS accounts of the student's performance and support generalizations with specific details or anecdotes. "Help the reader to imagine the student as you describe them."

AND, KEEP COPIES!

—MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

eds Cut Aid
BACK TO
START

Dad Opposed
To You Leaving
LOSE TURN

lave Money
College Visit
GO AHEAD
NO SPACES

income, minority student getting D's and F's at Southwest High when a teacher steered her to the program. Segednicev went on to graduate from San Diego State University.

All AVID students must enroll in an extracurricular activity. And AVID teachers keep an eye out for juniors and seniors whose schedules contain "soft" courses, which they may not realize hurt their chances with college admissions officers.

"If a counselor tries to enroll them in underwater basketweaving, we say 'No way,'" Matthews says.

In California, it's working. Eighty-four percent of AVID students complete college, according to an independent audit of the program by the Palo Alto Center for Research and Evaluation in Education.

Expect Success

Teachers around the country certainly want to see their students experience similar success. The ramifications of poor and minority students being locked out of college gates are too troubling. They often wonder, though, how to increase their students' chances in the college admissions game.

Above all else, push them academically, say those whose students are beating the odds. Navigate them toward college prep coursework such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, rather than let them stay in classes where they can more easily pull down passing grades.

"We purposely err on the side of putting kids into the classes who might not be able to handle it," says Albright of Annandale High. "We really work at dispelling the stereotypes about what an advanced student is supposed to look like. You cannot tell how capable a student is by where the waistband on their pants is."

Concentrated, well-executed college preparation is crucial.

"We need to tell and show these kids really specifically what colleges expect of them if they want to get in," says Albright. "We can't just say 'Do your best and study.'"

Experts agree.

"Academic preparation is critical to success in college," says David Baime, vice-president of governmental relations for the American Association of Community Colleges.

Several recent studies show that's not necessarily what's happening in high schools. In a poll this summer of 80,000 students in 19 states, nearly three-fifths of students said their classes were regular, grade-level courses, rather than college-prep or college level.

Katrina sends students back to start

Observers fear storm will wipe out college gains made by underrepresented students.

They had finally made it. But this fall, Hurricane Katrina dealt many low-income and minority students who beat the odds and enrolled in college yet another blow, decimating universities and community colleges along the Gulf Coast. In Louisiana alone, at least 18 campuses closed or indefinitely suspended classes in the immediate aftermath. Many students were displaced within only a few days of arriving.

An unsettling experience for all students who were affected by the storm, it was one whose impact on poor and minority students was especially worrisome to higher education officials.

"The kids we're most concerned about are the many first-generation students who often don't have a strong backup to continue in this," says Judy Hingle, a director at the National Association for College Admission Counseling. "And for a student on a marginal income, this will take a long time to recover from. This could put them so far under that it will be hard for them to return."

Closures meant that students who spent the previous months cobbling together enough scholarships and financial aid to attend in the first place suddenly had to find new schools and try to transfer that aid. Community colleges reported that their students were hit especially hard, losing homes and all belongings, and feared that many students could not afford to even transfer.

Echoing efforts to house evacuees, many colleges stepped up, offering available class space and free or deferred tuition on Web sites such as www.campusrelief.org. Teachers and guidance counselors assumed even heftier workloads, educating and advising the influx of hurricane evacuees.

Even with such generous offers and leeway from the feds, the storm's emotional toll could be insurmountable for many students.

"If you were planning to go away from home to school, you might not want to do that anymore," Hingle says. "You might just want to stick close to your family."

—C.K.

PHOTO: AP WORLDWIDE

At Albright's school, teachers prepare students for the rigorous year ahead by leading them through the IB Summer Institute. Not all students are introduced to the demands of advanced courses in elementary or middle school gifted and talented classes, says Albright, especially poor and minority children. When uninitiated students get to college prep classes, they can lag academically or behave inappropriately, setting themselves up for a downward spiral. The summer institute aims to help them reap the benefit of being there right from the start.

Also, Albright and her fellow teachers stress the importance of students taking "five solids" every year: English, math, social studies, foreign language, and science.

But even in pushing their students to take on advanced courses, teachers must be attuned to the financial pressures low-income students face.

Help Them Save

Andy Boyd, a teacher at Evergreen High School in Vancouver, Washington, wanted all of his 15 Advanced Placement Environmental Science students to take the corresponding AP exam in the spring. He knew that success on the test would boost their college admissions chances. He discovered a few weeks into the year, however, that many of his students couldn't afford the $82 fee for the test.

"We need to tell and show these kids really specifically what colleges expect. We can't just say 'Do your best and study.'"

—ERIN McVADON ALBRIGHT

So Boyd organized fund-raisers, including a holiday wreath sale. And he established a checking account for students at the school, letting them squirrel away money all year so it would hurt less when exam time came. Boyd's advice: be attuned to your students' financial situation and try to help.

"You have to have that structure and support system in place," says Boyd. "When they start getting down looking at the financial costs of room and board, they can get frustrated. You have to show them that this is doable."

Educators have plenty of other ways they can prepare their students mentally for college. One expert advises simply wearing your college sweatshirt and talking about your time there to make it tangible for students.

Don't assume that your freshmen and sophomores are too young to get ready. At Southwest High, Roncoroni's freshmen practice SAT questions and filling out financial aid forms "to give them an idea of what's coming down the pike."

PHOTO: JERRY WOLFORD

Without her teachers and guidance counselor, **Precious Barnes** doesn't think she would have overcome her obstacles to earning admission and a full scholarship to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Precious Barnes says her educators and guardians are the reason she muscled past the academic and financial hurdles.

"Other kids would say 'Yeah, I want to go to this school or get that scholarship,' and then they would just wait and let the deadline pass," says Barnes.

This fall she became part of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's freshman class. As one of a small group of students in a new program targeting poverty and underrepresented minorities—a program her guidance counselor heard about and advised her of—she will pay nothing for tuition, books, housing, or any other expenses.

"It was tiring," Barnes says of her struggle to get from high school, overcoming a tragic past, to UNC's campus. "But as far as feeling intimidated, I don't think I will be when I get there. I belong there, and I think I'll do fine." nea

The Tools

Check out a few other spots for information to help students beat the college game:

WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM is a clearinghouse of information about the SAT and research on the nation's colleges. You can even get a free practice SAT question each day to share with your students.

LEARN MORE ABOUT the nationwide AVID program at www.avidonline.org.

CHECK OUT OUR RESOURCES section for a few handy (and inexpensive) additions for your classroom (see page 53).

THE COLLEGE GAME

American Apartheid

An angry Jonathan Kozol goes beyond the statistics to show the human costs of resegregation.

Jonathan Kozol has been writing about the terrible and wonderful things that happen in low-income, minority schools for four decades. He was fired from his first public school teaching job in Boston for using a book by Black poet Langston Hughes. Since then he has written 11 books, winning several national awards. For his latest book, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America,* Kozol spent five years visiting 60 schools in 11 states. He spoke recently with *NEA Today*'s Alain Jehlen.

Let's dive right in, what's the central point of your new book?

KOZOL: In the year 2005, Black students are more segregated in public school than at any time since 1968. And the inequalities between school districts remain, and in many cases have increased.

But this book is not only about school apartheid. A great deal of the book is devoted to the extraordinary decency and courage of wonderful teachers, especially the delectable beauty of wonderful elementary school teachers who are in love with little children, and who thrive in their presence, and who share their sense of mischief and their sense of curiosity about the world.

"Apartheid" is strong language. Apartheid was legally required segregation. Isn't that different from what happens today?

KOZOL: It's a distinction without a difference. Look, the school district in the South Bronx, in which I've spent so much of the past 15 years, has 11,000 students in elementary and middle schools, of whom 26 are White. That's a segregation rate of 99.8 percent. Two-tenths of 1 percent mark the difference between legally enforced apartheid in Mississippi 50 years ago, and socially and economically enforced apartheid in New York today. To the children we cordon off from the mainstream of America, it doesn't matter a single jot whether this is the consequence of a state law, or state and city demographic practices and policies. It makes no difference at all.

The irony is that so many of the most deeply segregated schools I visit are named for the leaders of the integration struggle. I walk through these schools and I don't see the slightest hint that any vestige of the dream associated with Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King, has survived, not in these schools.

Some people say a Black student doesn't have to sit next to a White student to learn. What's your answer to that?

KOZOL: There are two issues here:

One is that money follows power. Once you cordon off a group of children, it is much easier to cheat them.

If the parents of poor Black and Latino kids want them to be in a class of 16 instead of 30, with a teacher who has had 12 years of good experience rather than one who's just starting out, they know the place to find that is the school district attended by middle class people where a substantial number of the children are White.

It's an amazing fact that after all these years, we still can walk into an all-Black or Latino school in most major cities, and find the same degrading, low-level job training that I saw in my first week as a teacher in Boston. Black girls were taken out of language arts and math classes to learn to sew for two hours. I said to myself, they didn't do that to my sister out in the suburbs where I grew up.

Four decades pass, and I walk into a high school in Los Angeles, and a student tells me she was forced to take sewing class last year, and this year is required to take hair-dressing. She starts to cry, and she says, "I didn't need to learn to sew. My mother is a seamstress in a sewing factory. I hoped for something more."

She wanted to go to Boston University. Her teacher said she was a very likely candidate for college.

I said, "What would you rather have taken?"

She said, "I wanted to take an AP class, but there was no space."

Now, I think that's an atrocity.

So you're saying, as a matter of practical politics, minority children will never get a fair shake unless they're learning alongside middle class, White children.

KOZOL: That's the first point. The second reason I believe is even more important: Children learn at least as much from one another as they do from any curriculum.

One of the worst forms of isolation that these inner city kids undergo is isolation from the full smorgasbord of options that a rich society can offer to its citizens.

I have spoken of the kids I know in the South Bronx who had a vague yearning to go to college but have never heard of Columbia, 20 minutes away on the bus. When I mention NYU, they're not sure what that is. They have no knowledge of what courses you ought to take in seventh grade if you want to get into an AP course in eleventh grade.

Kids pick up lots of this by osmosis, when they're among other children who, for reasons or sheer accident of birth and good fortune, have picked up this kind of familiarity. Then when they get into middle school, they hear about careers that they've never contemplated. Sometimes, in the best integrated schools, kids I've known, Black and White, have ended up choosing colleges together.

Web Exclusive

READ EXCERPTS from Kozol's *Shame of the Nation*

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB: Have we lost our way since *Brown v. Board of Education*? Should we refocus on integrating schools? Join the discussion at www.nea.org/neatodayextra/kozol.html

VIDEO: Reg Weaver conducts a lively interview with Kozol

AUDIO: Clips of the Q&A with Kozol

RESOURCES: Read more on closing the achievement gap

Find it all at:
www.nea.org/neatodayextra/kozol.html

Some people say integrated schools would be better, but this is what we've got. Let's do the best we can for these kids.

KOZOL: Keep them where they are, but make it better. Virtually the entire education discourse today is a series of efforts by which to demonstrate that segregated schooling is perfectible.

So from year to year, we are provided with new promises of new programs, usually with clever acronyms, which are guaranteed to turn it all around.

Every few years, there's a new plan. For some reason, it always has seven parts. If you do the following seven things that work, you can turn it all around.

One of the most highly heralded programs in New York in the 1960s was called Higher Horizons. The newspapers claimed spectacular gains in test scores. Seven years later, the program was declared to be a total failure.

Next came Effective Schools. And that, too, had either five or seven or eleven essential parts. After the Effective Schools movement petered out, there was More Effective Schools.

Today we have No Child Left Behind (NCLB). What's your take on that?

KOZOL: I differ with a number of other critics of NCLB. I don't believe it's basically a benign program that simply needs to be fixed. I consider it benighted from top to bottom. It is basically driven by the concept that teachers have an inherently perverse attraction to mediocrity, that we entered this career because we just love mediocrity, and only if we're scared out of our wits will we aspire to excellence.

All of this is Stalinist gibberish. Yes, there have always been some mediocre teachers, but the handful of teachers who really are in the wrong profession are an almost insignificant fraction of the problem that we face.

PHOTO TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF JONATHAN KOZOL; PHOTO TOP: MICHAEL QUAN, RIGHT: CHESTER SIMPSON

How is NCLB affecting schools? What are you seeing?

KOZOL: In the best-funded suburban schools, and even in just the average good American school that serves the mainstream of society, they find the testing pressures and the associated rituals like AYP [adequate yearly progress] and benchmarks, an irritant, a distraction. But these practices don't distort their personalities nor their instructional techniques.

They make their AYP or they don't. And the parents don't freak out. The parents care far more about the fact that their little girl is suddenly writing interesting narratives, and now that she's writing substantial amounts of material, is learning to punctuate and spell correctly. They care far more about that than they do about any AYP.

Whereas in inner city schools, there's a tremendous difference. These schools have historically been under siege. The principal feels it. No matter what she really believes is good education, she starts to toe the line if she wants to keep her job. So, they're suddenly diverting public money to teach kids tricks for passing tests. The poor principal is forced to consume at least a quarter of the teaching time, steal from children, to drill for the tests and administer the tests.

And in the lowest-performing schools, they introduce the rote approach, the scripted literacy programs, officially claimed to be teacher-proof.

The really scintillating young teachers, who are incandescent in their ability to steer a child's fascination, they call me up at night and cry. And they say, "It bores my students to death. And I am offended having to hold a timer in my hand. I think it's the worst possible pedagogy to interrupt a child, just as she's getting excited about a subject, because that's all the minutes for that mini-chunk of competency prescribed in this handbook."

These teachers are the ones we are going to lose. They're not going to stay in these schools.

So what can educators do to make schools better for low-income, minority students?

KOZOL: People ask me, are you going to end this book with a list of things to do? And, I tell them, I will not play that game. I'm not going to give you another recipe. Twelve essential ways to run a good segregated school. I'm not going to propose a small segregated school. I'm not going to propose a small segregated school with uniforms and silent lunches. I'm not going to propose a segregated school, even with slightly higher test scores. I'm too old to spend the rest of my life helping you polish the apple of apartheid.

This book is not about creating perfectible segregation. This book is about abolition of a national sin.

So when people say, what do you expect us to do, I say, I expect you to rise up, as courageous people have done before in America, and raise hell. I want to see our teachers develop a stronger political voice and find the courage to serve as witnesses to the injustices of which they are more keenly aware than anyone else. The older generation is weary now, but I want this book to empower these wonderful young teachers I meet (and when I say young, I don't mean necessarily 21—young in spirit), to carry on the struggle for which so many unselfish people gave their lives.

I do believe there will be another mass movement in this country, and I'd like to see it led by teachers. nea

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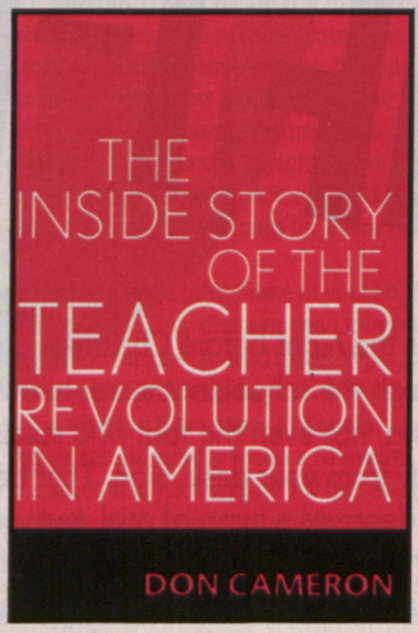

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– Bob Chase, NEA President, 1996-2002

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GIFT-A-RAMA!

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the school, not a creature was stirring, not even the fool who steals candy from your desk. Sigh. That bad boy deserves a lump of coal, but during this holiday season you should find peace, respect, and a nice little something wrapped up in a big red bow.

BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

FIVE GIFTS YOU DESERVE:

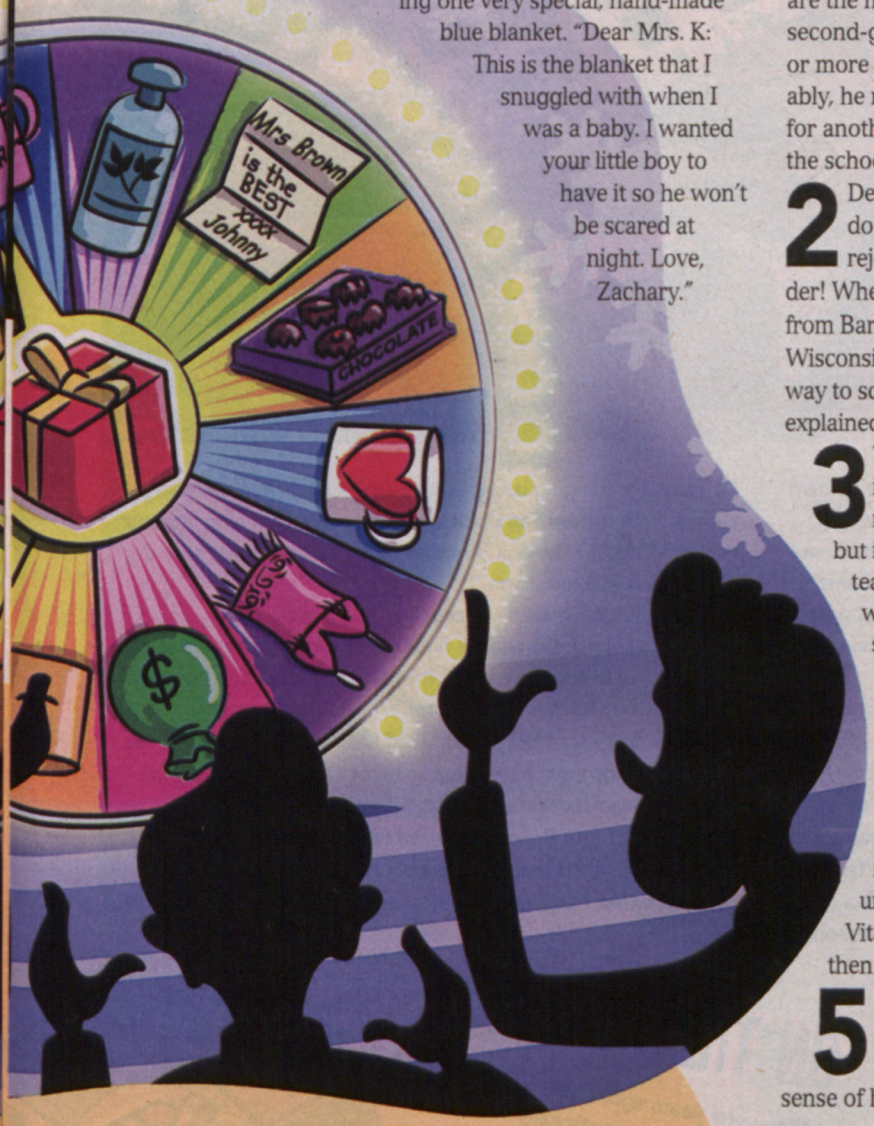
1 Get out of town for some "professional development" at the School House, where you can work on your stress management skills, catch up on some reading, and practice relaxing in the double Jacuzzi. Once a schoolhouse, this historic red brick building is now an award-winning bed and breakfast inn in rural Missouri. Check into the Teacher's Pet Suite, toss on a spa robe, and tell your principal you'll need regular workshops here in the future. For more information, see www.schoolhousebandb.com.

2 You don't need any more peppermint gunk for your tired toes. You just need a good pair of shoes with arch support and shock-absorbent soles. Check out Dansko professional clogs at www.dansko.com. Popular with chefs and midwives, these shoes are made for walking—among the desks and across the playground—but also when standing at the board, marching around the cafeteria, and running to the loo between classes.

3 Let the angels sing your praises this year. When parents ask you what you'd like for the holidays, why not suggest they lavish you with words? A letter of appreciation, addressed to your principal, will be placed in your personnel file and serve as positive evidence of your good work. Keep your own copy for inspiration on the days you'd like to lock the classroom door—before the kids come in.

4 When Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés landed on the coast of Tabasco, the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II thought a god had arrived and so, naturally, presented him with cocoa beans. When you arrive at school, don't you deserve the same heavenly treatment? Let's hope your secret Santa goes for the best French bonbons at La Maison du Chocolat, www.lamaisonduchocolat.com, where the 20-piece chocolate collection is "presented in the correct order of tasting."

5 Love! Most of all, you deserve a little love, wrapped in a crooked bow and sealed with a kiss. These are the gifts that come straight from the heart and make you cry. Just ask Jennifer Koziolek, a Minnesota teacher. Three years ago, during her first pregnancy, Koziolek lost 22 pounds in the fall semester and frequently missed school for hospital stays. Naturally her first-graders were worried, and they showered her with gifts before winter break—including one very special, hand-made blue blanket. "Dear Mrs. K: This is the blanket that I snuggled with when I was a baby. I wanted your little boy to have it so he won't be scared at night. Love, Zachary."



FIVE GIFTS YOU NEVER WANT TO SEE AGAIN:

1 The mugs are coming! The mugs are coming! Marching into your cabinets, falling into rows on your desk, shouting their cheery Madison Avenue mottos: "Teachers are the heart of learning!" After just four years on the job, a second-grade teacher in Berks County, Pennsylvania, has 20 or more mugs rotating to keep pencils upright. (Inconceivably, he neither drinks coffee nor tea.) Let's say he keeps at it for another 25 years, that's nearly one mug for every day of the school year!

2 Dead things are NOT good gifts. Some of your students do not understand this. They discover dead things and rejoice at their good fortune. A dead thing! What wonder! When they bestow this fortune upon you, take a lesson from Barb Hagerty at Amistad Elementary in Kennewick, Wisconsin. Last year, a second-grader found a "treasure" on his way to school and stashed it in his backpack for her. She gently explained that dead baby birds aren't sanitary keepsakes.

3 There may be an appropriate time to give silky nothings—but it's not after Friday's pizza lunch. And there may be an appropriate person to get such garb from—but it's not one of your students surely. A first-grade teacher in Chicago reports getting a see-through nightie with two show-girl tassels from one of her cuties. The same teacher also told the *Chicago Tribune* that she'd received used soap, a tattoo parlor gift certificate, and one earring—her teaching partner got the other.

4 Watermelon bath bubbles, almond-scented lotions, and freesia body sprays—you rake them in and wonder just how dog-tired you looked during parent conferences. (And sniff... nope, not me, thankfully.) You get the answer when you unwrap that cute basket from The Body Shop to find Vitamin C eye reviver "to wake up tired eyes...." Promise then to give yourself a good night's sleep.

5 Heh-heh, heh-heh, heh—or not! Take this Beavis & Butthead "School Sucks!" T-shirt and save it for waxing the car and polishing forks. We have no sense of humor.

HOLIDAY SAVINGS

When you can't part with past gifts, you end up filling your memory banks—and every nook and cranny too.

In 1985, little Kerri gave her teacher a brass apple to hang on her Christmas tree. Ten years later, a fifth-grader named Nathan, who loved to dribble and shoot, wrapped up a miniature mouse, poised on a basketball court.

After 20 years in a West Virginia classroom, fourth-grade teacher Lisa Cox has collected so many holiday ornaments that she sets aside a second tree in her Cross Lanes house for the teacher stuff. That's in addition to the guest bedroom, ahem, "The Teacher's Collection Room," where she keeps the ceramic figurines, embroidered pillows, wall hangings, scrapbooks, Beanie Babies, stuffed puppies, and what else? Oh, how about a wooden box clock and a handmade quilt?

ILLUSTRATION: PHILLIP SMALL

A whole generation of students, and Cox has never thrown away a single gift. She's swallowed some, sure. Teachers do love chocolate and, one year, a mother mixed up a jar of homemade cocoa for her. But each gift represents a child, a name, a smile, a story, maybe an adventure with spinach dip... (Don't ask! Just imagine a plate of dip, a teacher's chair, and one mischievous little boy.)

"I don't expect anything, but I do appreciate their gifts," Cox says. "These things mean an awful lot to me."

It's hard to pick a favorite, but last year's quilt might be it. Under the supervision of a parent, who had offered to "do art" with Cox's students, each child drew a square for the cheery red-bordered quilt. A penciled space adventure reads, "You taught me MATH, now I can reach for the STARS!" Another with a black dog traipsing across it says, "You're busy like a dog— Phoenix."

My favorite things

After 20 years, you're also bound to get a few, well, let's call them less attractive gifts—like a pair of boxer shorts. "I wouldn't have dreamed it!" she laughs. And how about a certain Bart Simpson souvenir that warns folks to "Just Say No to Crack!"—and it isn't talking about the street drug. It's talking about... can we say this in a family magazine?

No, says Cox.

And onward, she moseys through her house, opening cabinet doors to pick up treasure after treasure. "I got this last year," she says, picking up a basket with a covered bridge painted on its lid. "I got that," she continues, pointing to a jolly snowman, and she also got this, and that, and oh, that too.

"Teachers are real pack rats," she laughs.

Downstairs in the basement, on a shelf above her tools, 18 mugs are hanging on wooden pegs—just a small sampling, of course. One is from San Francisco, where a vacationing student was thinking of Miss Cox. Another says, "Short people stay dry the longest in a rainstorm."

Yes, that still makes her chuckle.

Back upstairs, Cox finally finds her favorite, if she has to pick one, or two, or three. Actually, it's four times that Cox has been nominated by former students for Who's Who Among American Teachers, in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2005. The book's publishers ask promising high school students to name their most influential teachers—and four times it seems that West Virginia's finest have reached back into their memory to their fourth-grade year.

"To think I had that much impact back then, for them to remember me," Cox says, "that to me, is what it's all about." nea

ON THE WEB:

Several years ago, Kathy Crain had a very difficult, emotionally disturbed third-grader—the kind of kid who hid under his desk and didn't willingly do anything she wanted him to do. At the end of the year, he brought her a guitar—a sad guitar with strings hanging each way, most likely discovered in a trash heap. And it touched her heart. The guitar is now named "El Kabong" and it's awarded annually to the teacher at her school who has tried to make beautiful music in spite of the pitfalls in the way. For more stories about the gifts that touched your heart—or your funny bone—go to www.neatoday.org.

PHOTO: CHRIS DORST

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Franklin County Education Association
Granville County Unit NCRSP
Hartland Education Association
Hingham Education Association
Illinois Education Association
Illinois Education Association, Region 57
ISTA District Council 2L
Jefferson County Teachers Association
Jersey County Education Association
Kansas NEA
Kohala High School
Lake Bluff Teachers Council
Lake Placid Elementary School
Lewis County Teachers Retirement Assn
Maine Education Association
Maine Education Association-Retired
Maine-Endwell Transportation Association
Manatee Education Association
Marion Education Association
Maryland State Teachers Association
Massachusetts Teachers Assn
MEA/NEA Retired Region 6
MEA-MFT
Membership Assistance CNTA
Michigan Education Association
Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association
Minto Education Association
Missouri NEA Charitable Fund
Monongalia County Education Association
Montgomery County Education Association
Moore Haven High School
National Education Association of New Mexico
North Dakota Education Association
NEA - Alaska
NEA - New Hampshire
NEA of New York
NEA Retirees Organization
NEA Women's Caucus
Nebraska State Education Association
Nebraska State Education Association Children's Fund
North Cambria ESP Association
Norfolk City Education Association
North Cambria Education Association
North Platte Education Association
Northwestern Ohio Education Association
Oakland Education Association
Ohio Education Association
Oklahoma Education Association
Park Ridge Education Association
Parma Education Association
Penn-Harris-Madison Teachers Association
Pennsylvania State Education Association
Pickerington Education Association
Portland Association of Teachers
Region 9 MEA-Retired
Revere Education Association
Ramona Teachers Association
Schuyler Education Association
Sierra Vista Classroom Teachers Association
Spanish Peaks UniServ
Sterling Education Association
The Wooster Education Association
Triad ESP Association
Trumbull Education Association
Tunkhannock Area Education Association
United Educators of San Francisco
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly
Utica Education Association
Ventura Unified Education Association
Vigo County Teachers Association
Waukesha Co Technical Ed Association
Wausau Ed Association
WEAC-Fox Valley
Wilmington Ed Association
Wisconsin Ed Association Council
Wyoming Ed Association

National Staff

Staff of the National Education Association
Staff of NEA Member Benefits
NEA Staff Organization (NEASO)
Association of Field Service Employees (AFSE)

HURRICANE RELIEF

RECEDING WATERS, LESSONS LEARNED

Displaced Gulf Coast students may be settled into their new schools, but Hurricane Katrina still offers lessons—and opportunities to grow—for all of us.

BY CINDY LONG

The school year had scarcely begun when principal Canzetta Hollis called an emergency assembly at Austin Middle School in Galveston, Texas. On a sweltering September morning, a crush of pre-adolescent students, giddy about an upcoming school dance, packed the hot auditorium. But once inside and seated, they didn't giggle or whisper. They didn't yawn or stretch or even fidget in their chairs. They quietly listened to their principal, telling them about a group of new children who would be starting at their school over the next few days. The new students, she explained, were hurricane evacuees.

Five days earlier, Hurricane Katrina had roared ashore from the Gulf of Mexico. A Category 4 storm, Katrina would prove to be the most devastating natural disaster in recent U.S. history. The storm unleashed its fury along the Gulf coast, leaving little behind but roiling floodwaters, splintered wood, twisted metal, and debris fields miles long. When tens of thousands fled the disaster zone, many headed west into Texas.

Principal Hollis was ready. She knew she'd be enrolling school children of the families sheltering at Galveston churches, hotels, and apartment complexes, and she made arrangements to have supplies and uniforms waiting. She wanted to be sure her students were ready as well. On the morning of the assembly, she told them exactly what behaviors she expected. She used words like helpful, welcoming, friendly, and thoughtful.

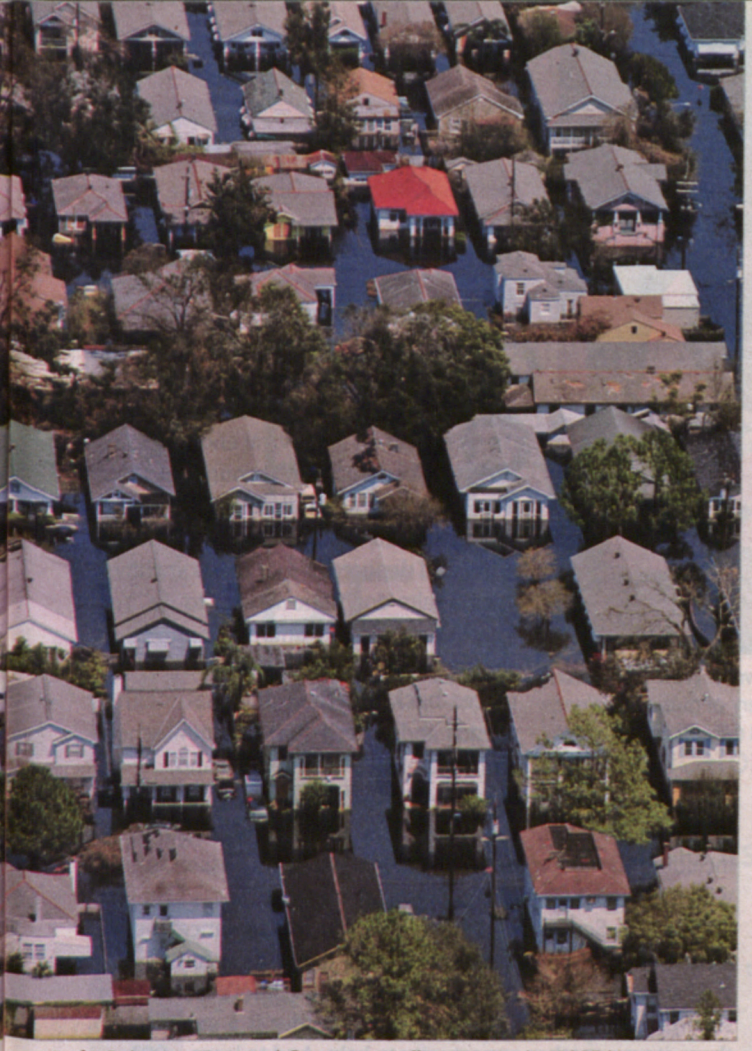
"Moments after the assembly, one of my students walked into my office and handed me three dollars," Hollis said. "That's when I knew they were listening, that they really heard me." She soon set up a "Giving Jar" outside her office that was filled to overflowing day after day.

It Could Have Been Us

This year marks the 105th anniversary of the Galveston Hurricane. That Category 4 storm struck September 8, 1900, killing as many as 10,000 people and wiping away three-quarters of the island city of Galveston.

Hollis, a Galveston native, is well-acquainted with the island community's storm history and knows how vulnerable it is to the capriciousness of hurricane season. In fact, just two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, another storm, Hurricane Rita, took aim at Galveston. Fortunately, the city was spared the brunt of the storm, which proved to be less violent than Katrina.

"It could have been us," she said. "And we are using the history of the Galveston hurricane along with Katrina [and Rita] as a lesson for our students, asking 'What if a major hurricane



(Left) Galveston Principal **Canzetta Hollis** is using the 2005 hurricane season to teach lessons in empathy. (Center) New Orleans under water. (Bottom) **Carolyn Mays** grew up in New Orleans.

hit here? What if you had to leave home and go to a new school? How would you like to be received?'"

Teachable Moments

There are lessons for everyone in the weeks and months following a disaster like Hurricane Katrina—we've learned, for example, about the necessity of comprehensive evacuation plans, especially for a city's most vulnerable populations. But educators in particular are provided with a host of "teachable moments," opportunities to stop, take a break from test preparation, and ask students, "what did we learn from this?"

While learning about hurricane formation and natural disasters make excellent science lessons, the best lessons seem to be those about the nature of giving and humanitarianism—learning to be altruistic, empathic, and selfless when others are in need.

From holding car washes and assembling care packages to writing letters and donating books, students from around the country are learning that they are able to contribute to the recovery and do something meaningful to help others.

"By providing children with ways to get involved, they overcome their feelings of helplessness and learn that it's possible to give back," said Teri Mahoney, a licensed social worker and NEA crisis counselor in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

In Mahoney's Owen J. Roberts school district near Philadelphia, the students live far from the Gulf Coast, but she points out that, no matter where they live, after a major disaster like Katrina, most children will feel an impact. "Those who live closer to the Gulf might wonder why they were spared the

Evacuated children's plight hits close to home

Texas educator Carolyn Mays empathized with, and aided, every child fleeing to her school after Katrina.

Carolyn Mays, the assistant principal of Oak Creek Elementary in Houston, Texas, grew up in New Orleans and went back to visit often. When Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters devastated that city's Ninth Ward, 44 members of Mays' family lost everything. "That was our home," she says.

But she was undeterred by the endless scenes and stories of desperation in the immediate aftermath of the storm, working tirelessly to help her displaced relatives find the assistance they needed. Each evening, she recruited family members spread across the country to assemble care packages for their displaced kin.

Even in the midst of helping her family in crisis, she focused attention each workday on enrolling 43 children who fled to Oak Creek from storm-ravaged cities and towns on the Gulf Coast. With so many of her own family going through the same experience, Mays felt a special affinity for the young storm victims and hustled to ensure the school would "hang out that welcome mat."

"I feel so related to them," says Mays, a 31-year teaching veteran. "It could have been my little cousins who had to come over on a bus and stay in a shelter and start a new school. I reach out to them and introduce myself to their parents and tell them I'm family of victims."

To help the new students get settled in at Oak Creek, Mays and other staff members handed out new backpacks stuffed with school supplies to each newcomer.

Though Mays carried the double concern about displaced family at her home and displaced children at her school—especially in the chaotic weeks following the storm—her determination to help was unflagging.

"It is energizing to meet a need that might otherwise go unmet," Mays says. "These are America's children. They may have moved from one state or city to the next, but they all need our help. They need all of us—the NEA family and educators nationwide—to reach out to them."

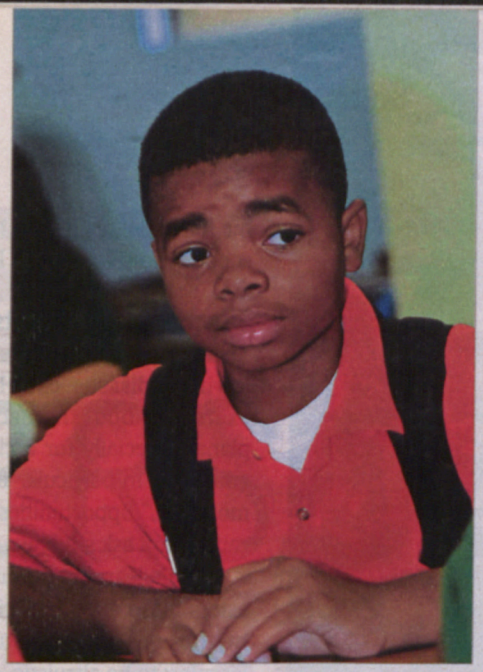
—CINDY LONG

PHOTO TOP: COURTESY OF FEMA; PHOTOS BOTTOM: SAM PIERSON

brunt of the storm," she said. "And those who live farther away might ask why their part of the country wasn't hit. But if they take time out to get involved, they learn there are ways to express their concern."

And as the holidays approach, Mahoney said it's important to remind students that even though the major headlines have disappeared, there is still work to be done on the Gulf coast, and that many residents are still displaced. Lesson plans can include how New Orleans and other cities and towns on the Gulf Coast are rebuilding. Pen pal programs can allow students to keep in touch with children who have yet to go back home. Class projects, such as a holiday fund-raiser or toy drive, can focus on service learning and the spirit of holiday giving—some educators might even go so far as to arrange a class trip to help with the rebuilding and cleanup over break.

The simple act of making and sending a handmade holiday greeting card, Mahoney said, can teach students that the need for support doesn't go away overnight. More importantly, the children who receive those handcrafted cards will learn that, even though months have passed, people still care.



Like many from his hometown of New Orleans, **Denzel Franklin** has a mastery of music—a talent welcomed by the band at his new school in Texas.

Lifelong Lessons

For the children who fled the storm and had to start anew, the lessons from Hurricane Katrina are the hardest to learn, but it's an education in survival and resilience they will benefit from throughout their lives. They've learned that everything can change in an instant, that life can be scary and dangerous, and that sometimes even adults don't know what to do. Yet, they've learned that there is kindness in the world, that it's possible to put the pieces back together, and that making friends and a fresh start in a new school can be as easy as joining the band.

"I love music," said Denzel Franklin, now a seventh grader at Austin Middle School who plays a variety of instruments, including the tenor bass and saxophone. "I was asked to play with the band. I'm glad they like music here too."

Back in September, Principal Hollis had to cancel Austin Middle School's much anticipated fall dance to accommodate area shelter residents who were using the school's facilities for showering. But the students didn't consider it a sacrifice. To them, it was another opportunity to help. And to learn. nea

Mustering the troops for hurricane help

Mississippi retiree Modena Carter offers clothes and hugs for Katrina's young evacuees.

When you're exhausted, have no clothes that fit, and just lost your home, you might not be in the best condition to walk into a totally new school and hit the books—especially if you don't know where your parents are and you're only six.

In that kind of situation, it would be really great to have some kindly, retired teachers around who understand kids and will take you under their wing.

And that's exactly what happened in Clarksdale, Mississippi, after Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, spreading evacuees through the region and the nation.

Carter, a retired social studies teacher who's on the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE) board of directors, started dialing up retired members soon after she heard the children were coming. "Everybody was willing to help," she said, except for two retirees who were taking care of relatives at home, and even those two offered to do anything they could from home.

The school superintendent offered the use of a wing in a school that wasn't being used at the time, and provided busing, food, and other supplies. Fifteen retired teachers went to work comforting, healing—and teaching—the children.

Some were without their parents because they were evacuated with other relatives. "One 6-year-old girl was an only child, and she was used to that," said Carter. "She was missing being hugged and held and all the attention you get when you're Mama's baby. So we took care of her one-on-one."

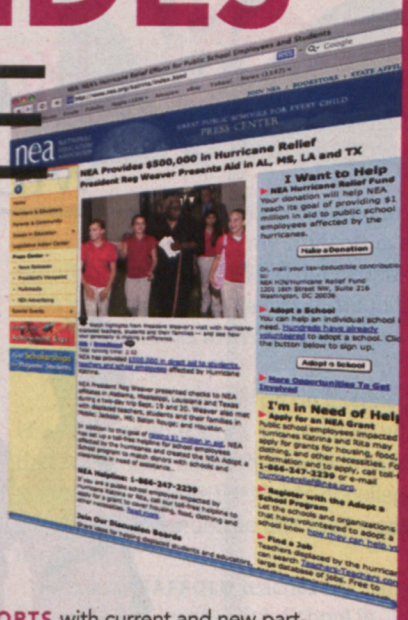
Once an educator, always an educator, so Carter and the other retirees provided reading, math, and science lessons to the children, who ranged from 4 to 17 years old.

Many of the children had no school clothes. They were wearing clothes given to them by kind-hearted citizens, which was better than nothing but not a good way to walk into class. "They were not looking their best," said Carter. "One little boy had red, fuzzy houseshoes." The retirees bought shoes and school uniforms with money donated by local residents, the MAE, and a school in Illinois that called looking for a way to help.

And the next week, the children—some 40 in all—entered regular Clarksdale classes.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

NEA PROVIDES HURRICANE RELIEF


nea
NEA Provides $500,000 in Hurricane Relief
President Reg Weaver Presents Aid in AL, MS, LA and TX
I Want to Help
NEA Hurricane Relief Fund
Make a Donation
Adopt a School
Adopt-a-School
I'm in Need of Help
Apply for an NEA Grant
Register with the Adopt a School Program
Find a Job

Tens of thousands of educators and their students needed help after a devastating hurricane season. NEA and its affiliates responded. Here's how:

NEA'S HURRICANE RELIEF FUND PLEDGED to raise $1 million to assist:

- Public school employees directly affected by the hurricane;
- Public school employees to help their students impacted by the hurricane; and,
- School rebuilding efforts (textbooks, equipment, supplies, etc.) if funds are available.

Please donate now by visiting **www.nea.org/disasterrelief**.

A TOLL-FREE HELPLINE, where public school employees affected by Katrina were able to apply for grants.

AN "ADOPT A SCHOOL" PROGRAM to match schools, local associations, and others wishing to adopt a school with schools in need of books, supplies, and equipment.

ON-THE-GROUND STAFFING to contact public school employees and advise them of the services and resources available to them from NEA and its affiliates.

A DESIGNATED AREA OF THE NEA WEB SITE, www.nea.org/disasterrelief, to accept online donations, provide the latest news on NEA's relief efforts, and connect those who want to help with those who need help.

COALITION EFFORTS with current and new partners, such as The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and Teachers-Teachers.com, to develop services and resources to assist public school employees and their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS and the Department of Education on policy changes needed in Katrina's aftermath.

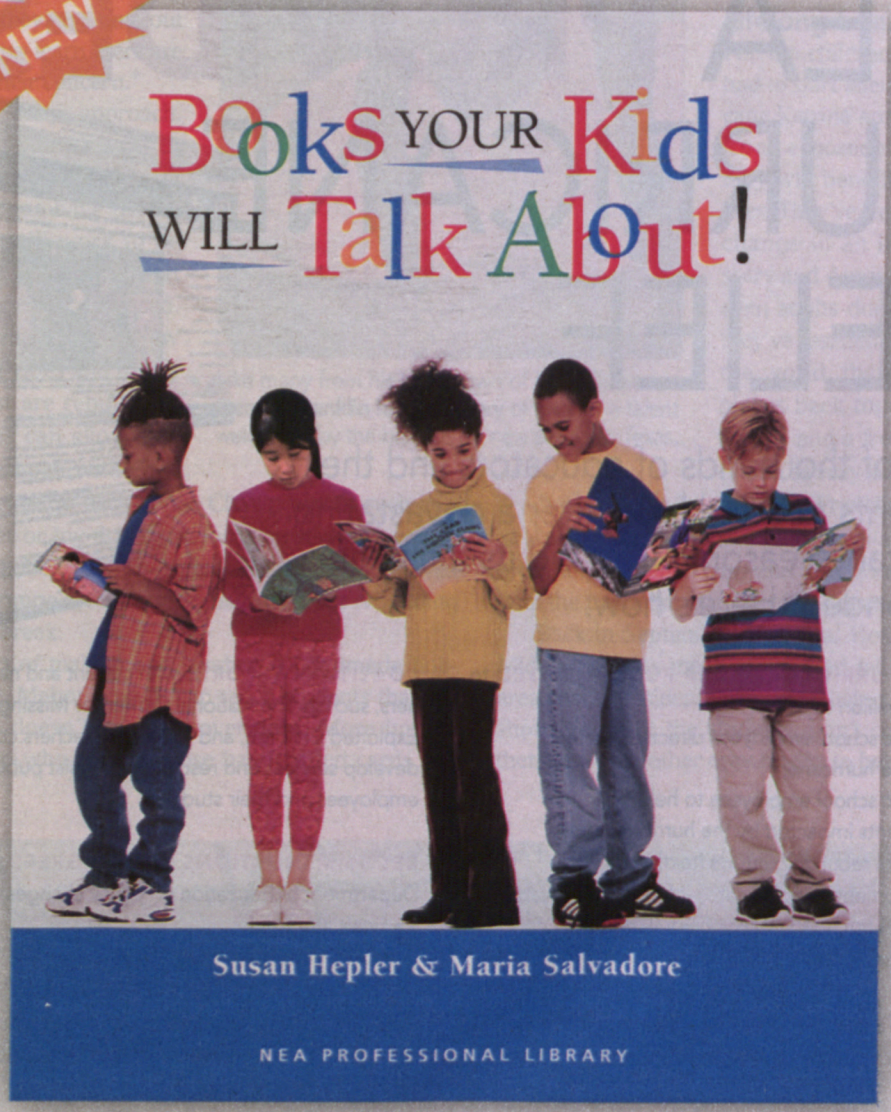
VISITS TO THE GULF COAST by NEA President Reg Weaver, who traveled to schools in four cities affected by the hurricane and distributed $500,000 to clean up, repair, and outfit students with school supplies. (For more, see page 16.)

EXTRA CUSTOMER CARE for affected members from NEA Member Benefits' program suppliers, including extended payment periods and assistance with lost documents.

To donate to the NEA Hurricane Relief Fund and for updates on NEA relief efforts, visit our Web site at: **www.nea.org/disasterrelief.**

A Guide to Children's Literature for Teachers and Parents (K-6)

NEW



Read any good books lately? It's fun to talk about our favorite books and literary conquests. Kids enjoy talking about their favorite books, too, and encouraging children to talk about what they've read is a powerful learning tool. So how can you connect kids with books that will inspire and motivate them? *Books Your Kids Will Talk About!* helps educators and parents navigate the ever-expanding universe of children's literature. This comprehensive, multicultural, annotated booklist is organized around themes that are important in a child's world. Teachers will find suggestions on how to integrate these books into the curriculum. Parents can use the books as a suggested reading list to foster lively discussion and self-exploration among young readers. Whether at home or in the classroom, it's easy to stir up a buzz about *Books!*

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Shipping charges will be added to each order.

Should high schools prepare all students for college?

YES

When you were in high school, were you told by a guidance counselor or teacher that you were not college material? Did you decide to defer college after high school graduation? Or perhaps you went to college right away, but then later decided to pursue another goal, with the possibility of returning to college afterward. In any case, I hope you were given the academic preparation and skills you would need to succeed in college. These skills are important for those who decide not to go to college as well.

As educators, we sometimes get caught up in the frustration of reminding students that they need to meet assignment deadlines and do a quality job. We have to prod lazy students who turn in mediocrity fully expecting to earn a top grade. This may cause us to have a negative outlook on such students' educational promise. However, the reality is that all students must come of their own volition to a place of willingness to do what's needed to reach the goal. When this happens, they begin to get more serious about school, meet those deadlines, and do their best work.

For many students, especially those of ethnic minority descent, college can be a lofty goal. Many have never known anyone to go to college. To enable those students to catch the dream, we must do all that we can to model education for them. I teach in a school with a large population of African-American and Hispanic students, along with a small Asian and Caucasian population. I personally take students on campus visits across the nation, and I try to bring in speakers of interest to my students every month, specifically seeking out people who have pulled themselves through the educational ranks to success and who look like my students.

Not all students will go on to college. However, as educators, we must do all that we can to ensure that students are prepared to handle the rigors of college, should they later decide that they want to attend.

BILLIJO SAFFOLD teaches English at Riverside University High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Should high schools prepare all students for college?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should teachers express their views on controversial topics in class?
The tally on this *NEA Today* Debate question: 60% Yes 40% No

Should teachers wear business attire to class?
If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Cindy Long, **clong@nea.org.**

NO

Traditional college is not for everyone. Our society needs people with a wide range of skills.

Although an advanced education is necessary for many jobs (doctors, lawyers, teachers), our society is dependent on more than white collar positions. Many students learn trades through experience. A number of jobs in these fields are not only satisfying but high paying.

Having grown up in the construction industry, I am the child of a "blue collar" employer. My father owned his residential painting business for 35 years. It did not require him to have a four-year degree. All of his education came on-the-job. His business was successful and rewarding and he provided first jobs for many of the kids in our neighborhood.

Traditional college is not the only place for students to learn skills. Trade schools help students in medical, technological, and other fields. My neighbor attended a trade school. He is a tool and die maker. He learned the skill in night classes. After spending time as an apprentice, he opened his own shop. It is now a multi-million dollar business.

This year, one of the teachers with whom I worked left education to pursue a career in massage therapy. This teacher spent evenings attending a trade school to learn a new occupation. This skill is now in high demand.

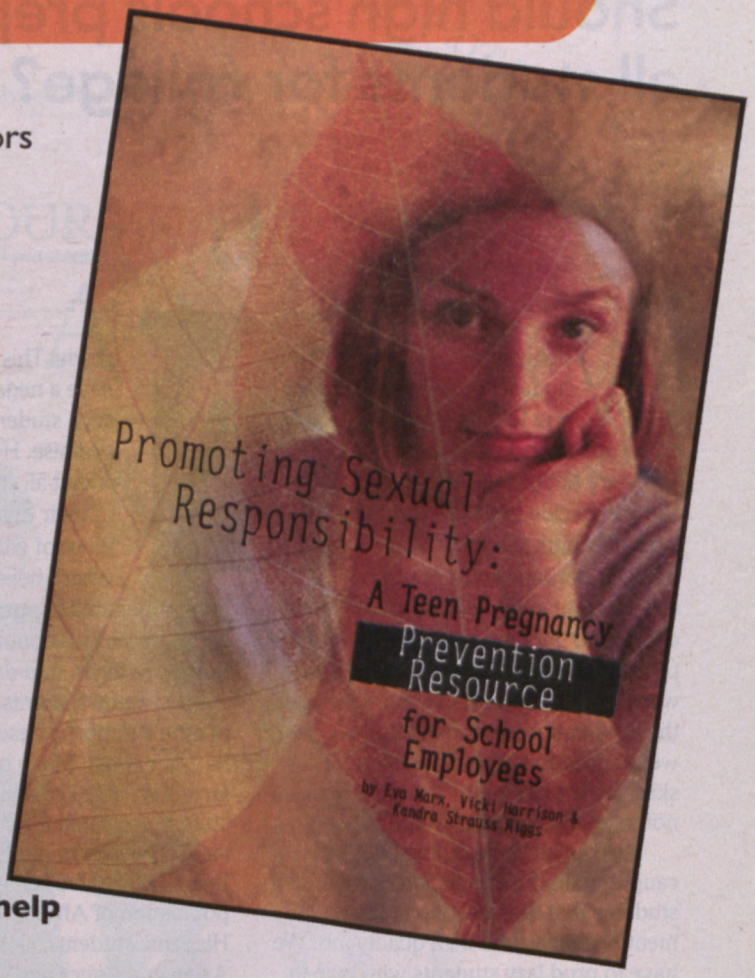
Let's also not forget about the young men and women who have chosen to serve our country in the military. Many of these young people are paying for college by serving our country, but many will make a career out of the service. And of course, in our current state of affairs, many of these fine young people will not come home.

A solid K–12 education can and should prepare all of us for our next stage in life, be that college, trade school, military service, immediate employment, or to be a parent who chooses to stay home and raise the next generation. Our children need a variety of post-secondary opportunities in order to be productive members of society.

BOBBI ASCHWANDEN THOMAS teaches computer skills at the Congress Middle School in Kansas City, Missouri.

ILLUSTRATION: TED PITTS

Don't miss your opportunity.


Promoting Sexual Responsibility:
A Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource for School Employees
by Eva Marx, Vicki Harrison & Kendra Strauss Riggs

Opportunities arise every day for educators to help students avoid risky behaviors that can result in unwanted consequences—like teen pregnancy. Despite a recent decline, the United States still leads the western industrialized world in teen pregnancy and unplanned births.

Promoting Sexual Responsibility: A Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource for School Employees offers strategies that educators can use to help students act responsibly. Drawing on current research and practice, this book answers some difficult questions, such as:

- ✓ **How pervasive is teen pregnancy?**
- ✓ **What can I do to reduce teen pregnancy, promote responsible behavior, and help students succeed?**
- ✓ **Are there examples of programs and activities that work?**
- ✓ **When should schools start to address this problem?**
- ✓ **How can we build a community coalition?**
- ✓ **How do we organize a program at my school?**

With more than 90 teenagers becoming pregnant each hour, schools needs resources like *Promoting Sexual Responsibility* to help find solutions.

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To order by phone, call 800-229-4200, toll free.

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The Fast Track

My granddaughter came home from her preK class and showed me her schoolwork. They had been studying the alphabet and were learning about the letter "X" that week.

"Wow. You're up to 'X' already," I said.

Her proud response: "Two more letters and I'm outta that school."

SALLY MORRIS
High school guidance counselor
Wellington, Florida

GRADE BOOSTER

I teach high school, and few teenagers share important school-related information with their parents. So every Friday, I e-mail the next week's assignment, test schedule, and any major due dates coming up to parents and students. I include notes on upcoming guest speakers, field trips, what we're studying in class and doing in the science lab, etc. Parents are grateful for the info and for a more convenient way to contact me than playing phone tag. Students find it helpful in case they forget their assignment or miss a school day. It helps me out too because parents stay on top of students at home. Grades have improved several percentage points overall since I've started weekly e-mails to parents!

SHELLY MITCHELL *Science teacher, Stillwater, Oklahoma*

Marvelous Maps

I ALWAYS NEEDED MAPS and other materials on various places around the world when I was teaching elementary school. My husband and many friends fly each week to different cities, so I asked them to bring home the magazines provided by the airlines. The magazines contain:

- **world and U.S. maps**
- **articles on customs around the world**
- **art events and**
- **many interesting articles on artists, musicians, and other famous people.**

The magazines are free and the airlines encourage passengers to take them. I collected of variety of publications and have an ample supply of interesting material for the students. The reading level was challenging for fourth and fifth graders, but they still enjoyed the articles. The maps also include time zones and can be used to tie mathematics and geography into one lesson.

CYNTHIA BELL
Math teacher
Markle, Indiana

Treasure Hunt

I love the idea of a classroom treasure chest. Any suggestions for really inexpensive items I can put in there? I don't want a competition among students about the goodies they pull from the chest. I'm just wondering what others use.

BARBARA ROTH
Kingston
Massachusetts

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Share your wisdom, ask your question!

What's the best thing a student ever said to you?

Send your answers to these or other questions on this page to sholcomb@nea.org. Or, send us a question you'd like to see posted. Please include your name, job, and the community and state where you work.

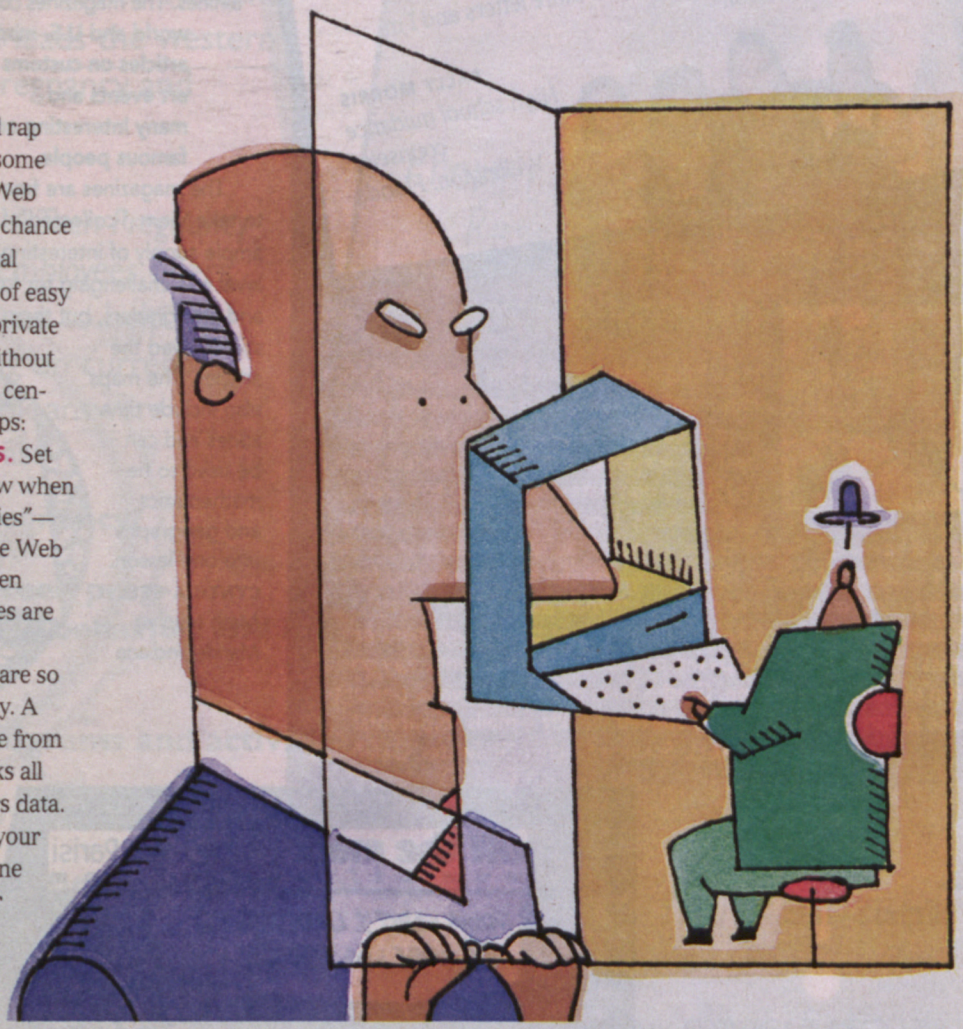
For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to Lyris@list.nea.org.

COMPUTER ILLUSTRATION: INGO FAST; MAP PHOTO: STOCKBYTE; CHEST PHOTO: PHOTODISC; CARTOON: MARC PARISI

Protect Your Privacy Online

The Web can make your financial life hum more efficiently, but money laundering schemes and credit card predators lurk in its shadows. Learn how to keep your business to yourself online.

BY SELENA MARANJIAN



Cyberspace gets a bad rap sometimes. Sure, at some less-than-reputable Web sites, you're taking a chance handing over personal information. But there are plenty of easy ways to keep your financial info private and your home computer safe, without sacrificing the advantages of 21st century technology. Here are some tips:

CONTROL THOSE COOKIES. Set your Web browser to let you know when various parties want to put "cookies"—files that can be read by an outside Web server—on your computer and then accept or deny them. Some cookies are useful, permitting sites you use frequently to remember who you are so you don't have to sign in every day. A less desirable cookie would be one from an advertising company that tracks all the Web sites you visit and gathers data.

HAVE AN ALIAS. If you use your main e-mail address in public online arenas such as message boards or chat rooms, you run the risk of spammers finding it and then sending you gobs of e-mails about Nigerian get-rich-quick schemes, barnyard animals, and more. Avoid this scenario by maintaining a separate e-mail account for public consumption. If it gets abused, you can easily kill it and open another, without having to alert everyone you know. You can get free e-mail accounts at www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com.

CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING to an anti-virus/security service such as those offered by McAfee (www.mcafee.com) or Norton (www.symantec.com). They can regularly check your computer for viruses and spyware and can serve as firewalls, keeping intruders out. A firewall is especially important if you routinely leave your computer running for long periods, as many people with cable modems now do. Consider turning off such computers when you're not using them.

DON'T REPLY TO "SPAM"—unsolicited e-mails you receive—even if you're urged to do so in order to be taken off a mailing list. They're usually sent to hordes of e-mail addresses, many of which are defunct. By replying, you're signaling that your e-mail address is a good one. Instead of less spam mail, you'll likely end up with more.

COVER YOUR BASES when entering contests or sweepstakes online. Check a site's privacy policy to be sure the personal information you give will not be sold to marketers.

DON'T GET CAUGHT IN A "PHISH" NET. Beware of seemingly authentic and urgent e-mails from your bank or an online entity that you use (such as eBay, PayPal, or AOL) saying that you need to click a link and update your account information (a practice called "phishing"). If your bank urgently needs information from you, it won't ask by e-mail. If you want to make sure your account information at a Web site is

ILLUSTRATION: ROBIN JAREAUX

correct, go there yourself and check. Clicking a link in an unsolicited e-mail that looks like it will take you to Amazon.com may actually take you to a phony look-alike site, where you'll be asked for your credit card numbers.

NEVER ASSUME THAT E-MAILS ARE PRIVATE. Employers sometimes monitor them, and so can some snooping strangers.

WHEN ENTERING YOUR CREDIT CARD NUMBERS or other personal information on a Web site you trust (such as that of a major online retailer), make sure your connection is secure. At the bottom or top of your Web browser's window, look for an icon such as a closed padlock or an unbroken key. Or look at the Web page address. A secure page's address should begin with "https://" instead of "http://".

CHECK YOUR CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS and credit report regularly for signs of foul play—or errors. (Fixing errors on your credit report can boost your credit score and lead to lower loan rates, saving you thousands of dollars.) Learn all about the credit industry and more tips for protecting yourself online at http://loan.yahoo.com/c/, www.cdt.org/privacy/guide/basic/topten.html, www.privacyrights.org, and www.ftc.gov.

Automate Your Financial Life

Put paychecks, payments, and pension savings on auto-pilot.

If you're a teacher, especially a new one, you're probably thinking more about lesson plans than financial plans. But you can save some headaches and worries by putting your finances on auto-pilot.

For starters, have your paycheck direct-deposited into your main bank account. You can have some of it automatically deposited into a savings account too. While you're at it, automate your retirement savings. Chances are, your employer already deducts some money for your pension plan each paycheck. But don't stop there. If your district offers a supplemental retirement savings plan, consider participating in it. (Some employers will even match a portion of your contributions—that's free money!) Aim to save and invest at least 10 percent of your income now for a more comfortable future. Start small and gradually bump it up. Finally, have recurring bills (such as utilities, cable TV, etc.) paid automatically via your checking account.

$ave Those Receipts!

The tax code won't ever be as hot a read as Dan Brown's latest, but it can help you earn back some of the cash you spend on your class (and we know it's a lot.)

DID YOU KNOW that teachers get a special tax break? Qualifying educators (and others working in school systems) who buy materials for their classes may deduct up to $250. Qualifying items include, books, lesson plans, software, flash cards, and crayons. Better still, you can claim the deduction right on your 1040 without having to itemize.

A RECENT NEA SURVEY FOUND that the average out-of-pocket amount teachers spend on class supplies is $443. Such a teacher would likely be able to claim a full $250 deduction, effectively reducing his or her income by that amount. If the educator were in a 25 percent tax bracket, that would amount to a significant savings of $62.50.

LEARN MORE at www.irs.gov and www.bankrate.com/brm/itax/tips/20030213a1.asp. And keep an eye out for developments—there's a bill in Congress aimed at broadening the deduction and upping it to $400. And if you haven't yet, make up a tax folder and round up those receipts for supplies you buy through the end of this year.

Drive a Hard Bargain

Don't fear the dealers on your next car-buying outing. Be prepared and you can beat them at their own game.

Who do you think has the advantage when you walk into a car dealership—you, who buys a car once every few years, or the salesperson, who negotiates sales every day? (Hint: it's probably not you.) You don't have to be a master negotiator, though. A little research and a bit of strategy can pay off.

First, fire up your computer and visit **www.edmunds.com**, **www.carbuyingtips.com**, and **www.cars.com** for more info about buying a car. Consider renting the contenders for an extended test drive. Minimize haggling by getting online quotes and firm prices from **www.autobytel.com**, **www.carmax.com**, **www.autonation.com**, and **www.carsdirect.com**.

If you walk into a dealership knowing what various models and options really cost and what incentives the dealer is working with, you'll be better off. Aim to pay perhaps 2 to 3 percent above the dealer invoice cost. To minimize negotiations, you can control the process more by e-mailing or faxing local dealerships. Tell them exactly which make, model, style, and options you want and ask them to send you their best price.

If you're buying a used car, check out its history for any red flags at Web sites such as **www.carfax.com**. You'll need the vehicle identification number (VIN). The best times to buy a vehicle are the end of the year, when people are focusing on holidays, not cars, and summer to fall, when dealers need to make room for next year's models.

www.neamb.com

ILLUSTRATION TOP CENTER: JING JING; TOP RIGHT: IMAGE100; BOTTOM: PUNCHSTOCK

Paws for a Cause

In Susan Luehrs' classroom in Hawaii, every dog has its day—and her special education students have a hand in their care.

FORGET HAMSTERS AND TURTLES as classroom pets. Luehrs' special education center at Kahuku High and Intermediate School has gone to the dogs.

Knowing that not all students are college-bound, Luehrs created Life Center, a school-sponsored facility where students learn domestic and career skills, such as carpentry, gardening, and the most popular, dog grooming and training. By giving hands-on experience with the cuddly canines, Luehrs reaches students in ways unimaginable in a traditional classroom.

Occasionally Luehrs (an animal lover who owns eight dogs!) and her students take the dogs on visits to schools and hospitals. By teaching others about the animals, the students develop confidence and public speaking skills as well.

Luehrs also created the "Read to Willie" elementary school program in which second and third graders read to the therapy dogs. "Since dogs don't laugh when they make mistakes, the young students love reading to their attentive four-legged friends," Luehrs says.

No longer ostracized, Luehrs' special education students are envied for their involvement in such innovative projects.

"At graduation this year we had the alumni return. I was so pleased to learn that each one has a good job and is being productive," she says. A couple secured jobs that they knew they'd love before even arriving for the first day of work—as professional dog groomers.

—DANIEL MOISE

Bring in Da' Funk

For journalism teacher Timm Pilcher, the faculty lounge isn't a cramped room with teachers milling around the water cooler.

HIS FACULTY LOUNGE is a Des Moines, Iowa, band boasting six educators. They specialize in 1970s funk favorites—everyone from Marvin Gaye to Earth, Wind, and Fire to Kool and the Gang. "Boogie Nights" and "Get Down on It," are favorites in their repertoire.

"The three things important to us are family, fun, and funk," Pilcher says. "And it has to be fun. The minute it becomes a job we will stop."

The band rocks a variety of venues, including the schools where its members teach. (Or, in music biz terms: their day jobs.) Faculty Lounge has even provided the soundtrack for proms at Pilcher's Hoover High School. And they've got a message behind the music.

"We feel that it's important to give back to the community as teachers," Pilcher says.

To that end, the band performs at various benefit concerts, including an annual appearance at Hoover High's Best Buddies Dance. Best Buddies enhances the lives of students with disabilities by providing them opportunities for friendships. The band also performed for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Pilcher discovered that the band has had a positive effect on his role as a teacher too. "It gives students a chance to see that teachers are real more than anything else. We have a pretty large student following. It doesn't hurt to have your students think you're hip and funky."

—DELECE SMITH-BARROW

PHOTOS TOP: LACY LUEHRS; BOTTOM: MARY DAILY LANGE

Some Kind of Teacher

He was only in third grade, but retired educator Elias Chapa saw what his future held.

THAT'S WHEN HE FOUND HIS INSPIRATION in his enthusiastic teacher, Miss Pond.

"I just fell in love with her and the way she taught," says Chapa, who now lives in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and is a member of the Michigan Education Association-Retired.

But years later, a high school guidance counselor advised him, "Why don't you go to work in the factory making cars, like the rest of your kind."

His kind was Mexican, because his grandparents were from Mexico. Chapa was born in the United States.

Chapa was determined to follow in Miss Pond's footsteps, although he had no support or guidance. When he earned an associate's degree and applied to a four-year college, he was told he wasn't eligible. After taking on other jobs, Chapa found work cleaning a public school, but faced prejudice again when he was fired for supposedly not properly cleaning the bathrooms. Teachers in his school pleaded his case and Chapa kept his job. Eventually, he enrolled in Eastern Michigan University part-time and earned his teaching credential.

While waiting for an opening, he subbed at the same school where he was also the custodian. Finally, he got his own class and went on to teach for 27 years with many low-income, minority students. "I told them, 'If I could make it, you can make it,' and some of them came back to say thanks," Chapa says.

Active in the union, he served on the MEA board of directors and pushed for more involvement for Hispanics and support professionals in Association leadership. For his work he received MEA's annual Herman W. Coleman Human Relations Award this year.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

Pint-sized Power Pointing

Michigan teacher Peggy Savage Dunn believes it's never too soon to become a computer whiz. Her students are tapping into technology early.

WHAT EDUCATOR ISN'T PROUD to learn her students have become teachers? Elementary school teacher Dunn didn't expect her kids to begin their careers in the second grade, though.

Dunn, the 2003 Michigan Elementary Science Teacher of the Year, believes in honing students' computing skills early. Incorporating computers in her students' curriculum proved rewarding when her 7- and 8-year-olds impressed the attendees of the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning conference with their Microsoft PowerPoint presentations.

The students divided into groups and each group worked on a presentation, such as "Stop Smoking" and "Pet Care." To prepare them, Dunn taught students how to scan and download pictures as well as keyboarding, layout, and design skills.

A teacher for more than 25 years and the "web goddess" for the Okemos Education Association Web site, Dunn is currently teaching kindergartners—and she has already introduced computers into her classroom. To her surprise, some of her students had already worked with computers for a year or two before entering her class.

"These kids are just coming up in that age," she says.

For the last seven years, Dunn created Web pages for each of her classes. They include her classes' Internet projects, newsletters, and links to education sites such as Learning.com—the online teaching tool she used to give students technology training.

"They're not afraid of computers like adults are," Dunn says. "They're not afraid to make mistakes."

—DELECE SMITH-BARROW

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact section editor Cynthia Kopkowski at **ckopkowski@nea.org**.

PHOTO BOTTOM: LINDA NUTTALL

resources

52 **Grants & Awards** Looking for ways to connect student learning with the real world? Check out the e-CYBERMISSION awards.

54 **Take Note** NEA HIN offers resources to help students deal with trauma.

55 **NEA's Read Across America** Deadline near for Youth Leaders for Literacy Grants.

56 **In Print** When kids ask about the meaning of art, do you know the answers?

59 **On the Web** Bring jazz into your social studies curriculum with "Jazz in America."

59 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** 'Tis the season for new cell phones and cell phone plans.

60 **Diversity Calendar** Honoring a grandson of slaves who became the nation's first African-American governor.

60 **Books by NEA Members** A spirited girl encounters resistance when she makes her middle school's all-male ice hockey team.

62 **On TV** Don't miss a modern adaptation of Hamlet.

The NEA Foundation Offers Three Grants with February Review

ON BEHALF OF NEA, The NEA Foundation offers *Fine Arts Grants* to members. Available to K–6 school art specialists through local NEA affiliates, the grants allow fine arts educators to create and implement programs that promote learning for students at risk of school failure. For more information on eligibility and for guidelines, check out www.neafoundation.org/programs/finearts.htm. Apply by **February 1, 2006,** for NEA Fine Arts Grants.

Innovation Grants and *Learning & Leadership Grants* are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science, and technology. Grant amounts are either $2,000 or $5,000. More than 1,500 grants have already been funded. Read about recent projects on the Foundation's Web site, and then submit your own idea.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

Practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply.

Applications are due by **February 1, 2006,** for both Innovation Grants and Learning & Leadership Grants.

Recipients will be notified by June 15, 2006. Applications are accepted on an ongoing, year-round basis, so it's never too late to apply. Proposals received after February 1 will be considered in the next grant review.

Applying for a grant is easy, so why wait? Visit www.neafoundation.org today for more information, including guidelines and a downloadable application. Or call 202-822-7840.

REVITALIZE YOURSELF IN THE ARTS

Are you so busy teaching an arts discipline that you never have time to actually *do* your own art? The Surdna Foundation invites arts teachers from specialized, public arts high schools to apply for its Arts Teachers Fellowship Program. Fellows design individualized courses of study, immerse themselves in their own creative work, interact with other professional artists, and stay current with new practices in order to revitalize their connection wth the arts they teach. Twenty awards of up to $5,000 each will be made with a $1,500 award to the fellow's school to support post-fellowship activities. The application deadline is **November 18, 2005.** For more information, go to www.surdna.org/programs/artsteachersfellowships.html.

A CYBERMISSION FOR STUDENTS

Sponsored by the U.S. Army, e-CYBERMISSION is a Web-based competition that allows teams of students in grades 6–9 to apply what they've learned in math, science, and technology to solve problems within their own communities. Students conduct research and experiments to test their hypotheses, work with community leaders, and communicate with online CyberGuides—army experts in science, math, and technology. Teams compete for regional and national

ILLUSTRATION: GETTYIMAGES

awards, including EE Savings Bonds, plaques, certificates, medals, and travel expenses to the national judging in Washington, D.C. Registration continues until **December 12, 2005.** Visit www.ecybermission.com.

PICTURE YOUR WAY TO A GRANT

Olympus America, Inc. and Tool Factory are sponsoring a student photo contest and offering classroom grants

for projects using Olympus digital camera technology and Tool Factory's project building software. Prizes include cameras, software, and workbooks. Deadlines for both programs are **December 30, 2005, and June 2, 2006.**

Educators can also receive help, free-of-charge, in writing a CCLC 21st Century Grant (federal monies earmarked for community learning centers, after-school programs, or community-based enrichment projects) if their school meets certain criteria and the proposal uses Olympus and Tool Factory products. On average, funding is $1,000 per pupil across 3–5 years. For info about all programs, visit www.toolfactory.com/olympus_contest/.

TEACH SAFETY WITH GOT 2B SAFE!

To help teachers and parents educate children on ways to

avoid dangerous situations that could lead to abduction, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Honeywell have partnered to develop a program called Got 2B Safe!

As part of the initiative, awards will be given that recognize the best classroom lesson plans created by teachers using four basic rules of child safety.

Prizes include classroom makeovers and gift certificates for school supplies worth as much as $1,000. The deadline for submission is **December 31, 2005.** Visit www.honeywell.com/got2bsafe for more information, plus child-friendly tips, games, and downloads.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The 2006 Seaworld/Busch Gardens/Fujifilm Environmental Excellence Awards recognize outstanding efforts of K–12 teachers and students working together at the grassroots level to preserve and protect the environment. Projects must be sponsored by a formally recognized school group.

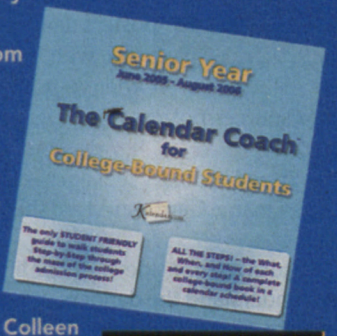
Prizes include $10,000 in cash, camera film, T-shirts, and travel expenses to Seaworld in Orlando.

The entry deadline is **November 30, 2005.** For more information, applications, and a look at winning teams and projects, visit the Seaworld Web site at www.seaworld.org/conservation-matters/eea/.

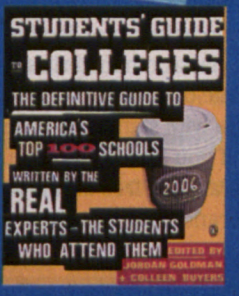
The College Game: Resources to help you score an extra turn

If your students can't afford thousands of dollars for a college admissions coach, a few hundred for an SAT prep course, or the travel costs of criss-crossing the country on college tours, don't worry. There's free or bargain-basement help available:

• Why pay thousands for a coach when they're spilling their secrets in books for a fraction of the cost? In ***Rock Hard Apps: How to Write a Killer College Application*** and ***The Truth About Getting In: A Top College Advisor Tells You Everything You Need to Know,*** you get the expertise of Katherine Cohen, a former Ivy League admissions essay reader for $16 per book (from Hyperion Books, www.hyperionbooks.com).



• Face it, the hotel bills, transportation, and meal costs add up on college visits. If your students can't afford too many excursions, pick up Jordan Goldman and Colleen Buyers' ***2006 Students' Guide to Colleges*** for about $18 (Penguin Group, www.penguinputnam.com). It's the first all-student written and edited guide to 100 of the nation's top schools, which gives students a real feel for the campus and community. Want to know if Georgetown is snobby, or if anyone has time for extracurriculars at NYU? Goldman and Buyers will tell you. Readers get each school's vitals, admissions requirements, contact information and three funny, honest, and blunt reviews from students talking about their campus life. A companion Web site, www.studentsguidetocolleges.com, offers free peeks at each school's info.



• Missed application or test registration deadlines can be ruinous. And staying on top of them isn't easy if students are working, or if their parents don't know to remind them. **The Calendar Coach** from Kalendarium Inc. offers daily, detailed reminders for students about tasks such as requesting recommendation letters and signing up for the SAT and AP tests. There are even blocks advising them to ask their parents well in advance for a copy of their tax returns in time for the March 1 FAFSA application. In addition to the daily calendar blurbs, each month is accompanied by a detailed explanation of what students should be doing that month to prepare for college. A calendar for your classroom will run you $19.95 (save $2 by ordering it on online at www.thekalendarium.com). There are also discounts for buying in bulk.

PHOTO: CORBIS

Take Note

Ways To Teach Tolerance

Tolerance.Org, a Web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides free educational materials that promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity. Projects of note include:

• **MIX IT UP!** Nowhere are the boundaries of group membership more clearly drawn than in the school cafeteria. Encourage kids to challenge the social climate on November 15 by stepping out of their comfort zone and eating lunch with different people. Go to www.mixitup.org for a free starter kit, downloadable posters, and much more.

• **ONE WORLD POSTER SET.** Designed to help students think about their responsibilities to each other, this kit includes 10 color posters and a standards-based teacher's guide with lesson plans for every grade. Order your free kit at www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/posters.jsp.

• **ONE SURVIVOR REMEMBERS.** Gerda Weissman was 15 years old—an ordinary teenager—when the Nazis came for her. Unlike so many, Gerda survived the horrors of the Holocaust.

Decades later she devotes her life to helping others understand the dangers of hate and extremism. Go to www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/survivor. jsp for information and free classroom materials, including a 40-minute documentary film and a teacher's guide with standards-based lesson plans.

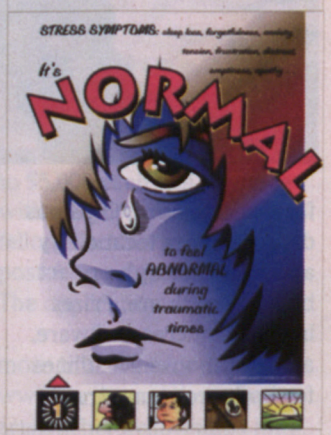
If you find these resources worthwhile, check out *Teaching Tolerance*, a free online magazine published twice a year by Tolerance.org that showcases innovative tolerance initiatives in schools across the country. The fall 2005 issue looks at school bus bullying, teaching the Holocaust, helping immigrant students cope with "dual identity," and more. Read this award-winning publication at www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/index.jsp.

Survivors and Everyday Heroes

NEA·HIN

Trauma is not limited to those whose lives are forever changed by high-profile disasters. Every year, in towns and cities across the nation, teachers and other school staff experience the heartbreak of trauma or loss. It can be a sudden, unexpected death of a student, a colleague, a student's parent, or other event. The more common traumas often don't make the news, as did Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, or Columbine. Yet, they impact the lives of everyone who lives and works together each school day. Whether exposed directly or through the lives of students, we see more of life's challenges than most people will ever know.

That exposure can take a toll on our health and well-being. So, how can we protect our own mental health—and that of our students—when challenged by trauma or loss?



The NEA Health Information Network offers resources that can help. Visit their Web site at www.neahin.org/programs/mentalhealth/index.htm to download materials to help school staff and students cope with trauma, including *Dealing with Trauma and Loss: Practical Strategies for Enhancing Resilience.*

Helping Iraq's Children

DURING AND AFTER OPERATION Iraqi Freedom, American soldiers passing through Iraqi villages were horrified at the conditions of Iraqi schools, which had been severely neglected under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Corralled in sweltering, one-room buildings without air conditioning, fans, windows, solid floors, or even toilets, Iraqi students lack even the rudimentary supplies that American children take for granted. Libraries and books are almost nonexistent. Without these basic tools of education, Iraqi children face an uphill struggle to learn.

Moved by the plight of these children, many American soldiers are working on their days off to gather supplies sent by family members, friends, and various groups and take them to villages. Their efforts have been met with gratitude from local Iraqis and their children, who now have access to the basic tools of education.

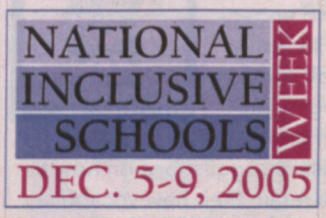
Inspired by these soldiers, actor Gary Sinise and author Laura Hillenbrand founded Operation Iraqi Children, a grassroots program to provide concerned Americans with a means to reach out to Iraqi students and help support our soldiers' efforts to assist the Iraqi people.

Through the School Supply Kit Program, American children, church groups, and other organizations can help Iraqis by gathering school supplies in local drives, assembling them in kits according to instructions, then sending them to the OIC Warehouse for transport to Iraq, where U.S. soldiers will take them to Iraqi villages.

To find out how to participate in Operation Iraqi Children through fund-raising, mailing supply kits, or making a donation, visit the OIC Web site at www.operationiraqichildren.org.

National Inclusive Schools Week

In classrooms and communities throughout the nation, educators, students, and families will celebrate National Inclusive Schools Week from **December 5–9.** Sponsored by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative and Education Development Center, in partnership with NEA, this event highlights the progress schools have made in delivering a quality education to all students—particularly those with disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It's also an excellent time for school communities to discuss how they can continue to improve their ability to educate all children and youth.



The theme, "Bridging the Gap: Achievement for All," focuses on how schools and districts are narrowing the disparity in performance between individual groups of students. Kits to celebrate the event and promote inclusive practices are available for download at www.inclusiveschools.org. Of particular interest are resources on how to translate into practice research on closing the achievement gap.

Free Abduction Video and Organizing Kit

The Good Knight Network is offering an abduction awareness video and/or organizational kit free to NEA members throughout the year. The video is for concerned citizens; the kit is for police departments, schools, and other organizations. The film walks the viewer through 10 deceptions that criminals use to abduct and victimize kids. Call 301-595-8989 to request a copy.

Super-Sized Video

Educators can now buy an educationally enhanced version of the Oscar-nominated Morgan Spurlock film, *Super Size Me*. The cautionary food tale centers on the medical effects of a fast food-driven lifestyle, and explores the link between junk food and obesity by focusing on Spurlock's sustained 30-day diet of nothing but fast food.

Distributed by Hart Sharp Video, the enhanced DVD version is suitable for grades 6–12 and has been developed to promote students' awareness of their personal responsibility for their health by exposing them to relevant information, engaging them in hands-on activities and lessons, and facilitating appropriate discussions.

The DVD, rated PG, comes complete with a teacher's guide, printable lesson plans, student handouts, pop-up factoids, and a trivia quiz. Curriculum areas addressed include behavioral studies and life skills, setting goals, diet and nutrition, changing habits, exploring media literacy, and more. For more information or to order the $39.99 DVD, visit www.supersizemestore.com.

Human and Civil Rights Awards

You're invited to participate in NEA's 40th Annual Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, July 1, 2006, in Orlando, Florida. Please join us to:

- celebrate the 40th anniversary of the merger of the American Teachers Association and the National Education Association,
- honor individuals and affiliates for their human and civil rights contributions,
- celebrate NEA's multicultural roots,
- recharge ourselves for the work ahead.

But don't just attend the dinner. Get involved by nominating an individual, organization, colleague, or affiliate for an award. Complete your nomination form online at www.nea.org/annualmeeting/hcrawards/images/hcrawards06i.pdf. Note these dates:

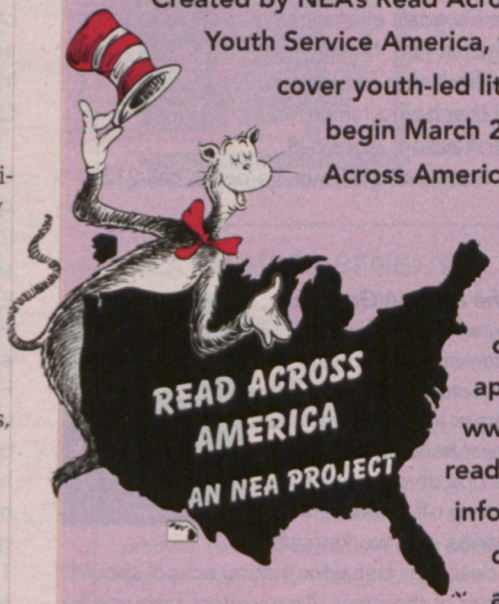
- **December 1, 2005**—Deadline for submission of award nomination forms to NEA Human and Civil Rights
- **January/February 2006**—Selection of awardees by the NEA Executive Committee, based on recommendations by the Human and Civil Rights Committee.

For more, contact: Sabrina Williams (sawilliams@nea.org), NEA Human and Civil Rights, NEA, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Read and Lead

Are your students interested in creating their own literacy projects? Would they like to receive recognition? NEA's Read Across America Youth Leaders for Literacy Grants will reward students for their innovation.

Created by NEA's Read Across America and Youth Service America, these $500 grants cover youth-led literacy projects that begin March 2, NEA's Read Across America Day, and end April 21–22, Youth Service Day. The November 15 deadline is fast approaching. Visit www.nea.org/readacross for more information and a downloadable application.



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ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTYIMAGES

In Print

TEACHING READING AND SCIENCE

Written by experienced science educators Karen Rohrich Ansberry and Emily Morgan, ***Picture-Perfect Science Lessons: Using Children's Books to Guide Inquiry, Grades 3–6***, contains 15 standards-based, ready-to-teach science lessons that integrate science and reading in a natural way for young learners. Drawing on diverse and high-quality picture books, this volume covers a broad spectrum of science content and provides lesson plans with reproducible student pages and assessments. 304 pp. $28.95 from NSTA Press. To order, call 800-277-5300.

BRINGING UP BOYS

After learning that boys receive at least 70 percent of D's and F's given to students in the United States, constitute 80 percent of all high school dropouts, and are involved in 90 percent of classroom discipline problems, authors Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens set out to learn why boys are facing rough times in school. In ***The Minds of Boys: Saving Our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life***, the authors use biological research and more than 20 years of classroom experience to present a detailed plan of how to most effectively teach boys. 368 pp. $24.95 from Jossey-Bass. To order, visit www.josseybass.com.

AN INCORRIGIBLE KITTY LEARNS TO BE HIMSELF

Rotten Ralph learns the pitfalls of competition in the comical story ***Best in Show for Rotten Ralph*** by Jack Gantos and Nicole Rubel. The ever popular Ralph discovers the value of working hard to achieve his goals even when the odds are stacked against him. More importantly, our favorite feline finds that foibles can become strengths, and that being himself is always the best course of action. Ages 6–8. 48 pp. $15 from Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. To order, call 212-206-5367.

MEET THE PRESS

Building Bridges with the Press: A Guide for Educators by Julie Blair, an experienced *Education Week* reporter, offers practical advice for schools on how to develop solid relationships with the press and do a better job of getting out the *real news* about education. This manual offers tips on organizing press conferences, heading off public relations crises, pitching stories, and working with photographers. It also describes behavior that no school should tolerate from any member of the press. An excellent resource for principals and district communications officials. 96 pp. $19.95 from Education Week Press. Go to www.educationweek.org.

A ROYAL RUCKUS

When a young prince bumps his head playing ball, chaos breaks loose in the castle as everyone scrambles to find a bandage for His Royal Highness. ***The Prince has a Boo-Boo*** makes learning to read fun and engaging. From the *I'm Going to READ* series, this brightly illustrated picture book comes with a 50-word bank that helps beginning readers increase vocabulary and improve phonetic skills. It also provides a list of suggestions on how to use the word bank to help readers retain their new vocabulary. Ages 4–6. 21 pp. $11.95 from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. To order, call 212-532-7160.

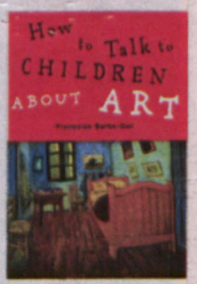
A WARNING TO LANDLORDS

Kids will giggle through this classic Japanese folk tale about a stubborn, miserly landlord and his satisfying comeuppance. Retold by Allen Say, ***Under the Cherry Blossom Tree*** uses simple, charming illustrations woven with short bouts of text to narrate how the unfortunate landlord's ingestion of a cherry pit leads to free fish and a lovely pond for the poor villagers. 32 pp. $5.95 from Houghton Mifflin Company. To order visit www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com.

GETTING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

Set in the 1930s, Marian Hale's first novel, ***The Truth About Sparrows***, tells the gripping story of the Wynn family as they endure hardships brought on by the droughts and economic devastation of the Great Depression. This grim, yet uplifting story explores the theme that even though times may be tough, the bonds of friendship and family can overcome obstacles. Hale's unforgettable characters and vivid imagery make historical fiction accessible and engaging for young readers. 260 pp. $16.95 from Henry Holt and Company. To order, go to www.henryholt.com.

WHY DOES THAT PAINTING LOOK LIKE SCRIBBLES?



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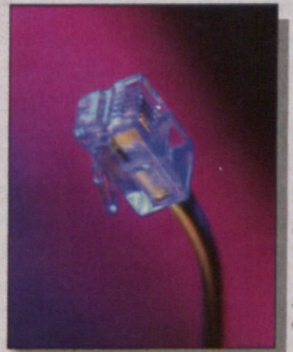

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On the Web

JAZZ UP YOUR CLASSROOM

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has developed "Jazz in America," an Internet-based jazz curriculum for social studies, American history, and music classes. The fifth-, eighth-, and 11th-grade curricula include eight, 50-minute class lessons to be taught as part of social studies or American history courses. Located on the Web at www.jazzinamerica.org, the curriculum presents a historical overview; examines characteristics of various jazz styles; highlights contributions of important performers and composers; and explores the social, economic, and political contexts. Other educational items, including a comprehensive jazz resource library, downloadable student handouts, a teacher's manual, and assessments can also be found on the Web site.

EXPLORING THE NANOWORLD

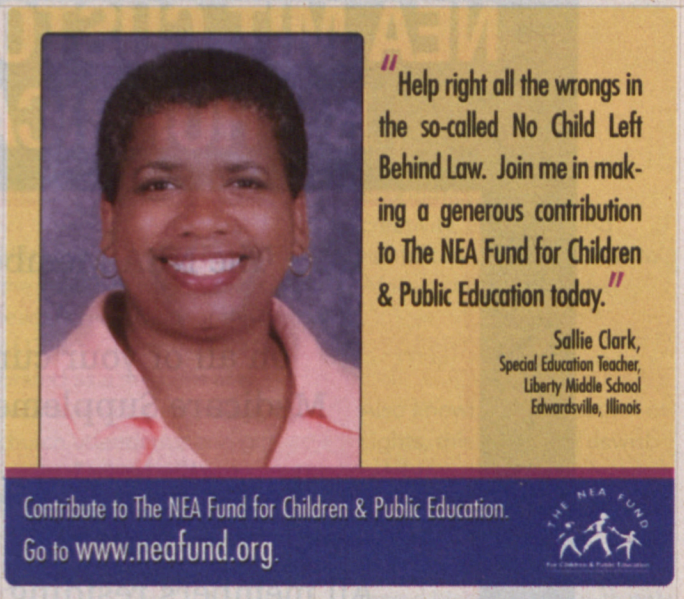
The University of Wisconsin, with support from the National Science Foundation, has developed online teaching modules to help teachers incorporate nanotechnology into high school chemistry and middle school technology classes. High school modules explore X-ray diffraction and scanning probe microscopy, shape-memory alloys, light-emitting diodes, and ferrofluid. Middle school modules explore magnetism, memory metals, and help answer the question, "how do we 'see' what we cannot see?" Modules include overviews, curriculum suggestions, lesson plans, guided notes, experiments, and assessments. Go to www.mrsec.wisc.edu/Edetc/modules/index.html.

CAREER PLANNING THE FUN WAY

Three hundred middle school students from around the country worked on the Funworks Web site, created by the Education Development Center, to link students' interests and hobbies to future careers. The site includes a career quiz, information and resources on different types of jobs, career-related games, and a section for educators. Go to www.thefunworks.org.

A SITE FOR MEDIA SPECIALISTS

This area of the PBS TeacherSource Web site provides a number of resources for librarians and media specialists, including free MARC records for PBS programming that you tape off-air, dozens of recommended books and sites for all grade levels and subject areas, full TV schedules for upcoming PBS programs, copyright and taping rights information, access to more than 4,000 free lesson plans and activity ideas, and more. Go to www.pbs.org/teachersource/library.htm.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Over the next few weeks, current participants and many other NEA members age 65 and over will also receive a packet of materials explaining the new Program options K and L. Visit **www.neamb.com/medicarevid** for more information or call 1-800-637-4636 to obtain an enrollment kit.

GIVE THE GIFT OF GAB to a family member or friend this holiday season with a wireless phone package from NEA Cellular. Teens, in particular, will enjoy the latest generation (have we gone beyond 'X' yet?) cell phone. And did we tell you that the phone* is free, and comes with free accessories, and free shipping and handling?

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DIVERSITY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 1—FOUNDING OF FIRST MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

Founded in 1848, the Boston Female Medical School opened with 12 applicants. Visit *The Changing Face of Medicine*, an online exhibit exploring how women have influenced and enhanced the practice of medicine at www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/.

NOVEMBER 7—ELECTION OF L. DOUGLAS WILDER

The grandson of slaves, as well as a Korean War hero, chemist, and lawyer, L. Douglas Wilder was elected governor of the State of Virginia in 1989, becoming our nation's first African-American to serve in this important office.

NOVEMBER 24—THANKSGIVING DAY

Without assistance from the Wampanoag Indians, the Plymouth colonists would have perished from cold, disease, and starvation. Learn about native foods and preparation, colonists' dining customs, 'Mayflower Myths,' and their shared harvest feast at www.historychannel.com/exhibits/thanksgiving/thnkmeal.html.

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS

Historians date this holiday to the year 336, when Christian leaders met to honor the birth of Christ. Christmas is celebrated as a religious and secular event, marked by church attendance and gift-giving. Federal and state governments close, as do most businesses.

DECEMBER 26–JANUARY 1—KWANZAA

A unique African-American celebration created in 1966, this seven-day festival is dedicated to the principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith, and reinforces connectedness to African cultural identity.

DECEMBER 26–JANUARY 2—HANUKKAH

Also known as the Festival of Lights, this eight-day Jewish celebration commemorates the retaking of the Temple in Jerusalem in the 2nd century BCE. Judah Maccabee lit the sacred Menorah, and with only a small flask of oil, the flames burned for eight days. In remembrance, Jews light a menorah, adding a candle daily for the days the oil lasted, and eat potato pancakes.

BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

CAVEMAN ART TEACHER
By Jeff Dombek

An author, illustrator, and art teacher combines his talents in this humorous book. Written for a transitional reading level, the tale is crafted as an early chapter book of about 2,500 words. In it, Fullerton Lane Elementary School is visited by Mr. Caveman, who announces himself as the new substitute art teacher. With wild hair, limited vocabulary, and animal skins for clothes, Mr. Caveman makes quite an impression on the stunned second graders, who wonder *what* can be learned from such an outlandish person. 24 pp. $4.95, Corn Tassel Press. To order, go to www.amazon.com.

TOMBOY TROUBLES
By Dawn FitzGerald

While most girls her age are starting ballet and cheerleading, Joanna Giordano finds her calling in ice hockey. Unfortunately, as the only girl on her middle school's team, she faces opposition from the principal, students, other parents—even her best friend. Joanna struggles to defend her dream while dealing with the growing-pains all seventh-grade girls face. Written by a substitute teacher, this work of adolescent fiction follows the trials of a spirited tomboy in a classroom filled with future homemakers. 136 pp. $15.95 from Roaring Book Press. To order, call 860-350-4434.

GRAVE RUBBINGS: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS
By Ann M. DeVenezia

This collection of 80 poems reflects the rich history of an Italian family in the Rose City of Madison, New Jersey, by a descendent who honors their memory. DeVenezia, a retired English teacher and poet, gives the biographies of 31 family members buried in Saint Vincent Martyr Cemetery. With chapters named after roses patented in Madison, DeVenezia organizes the poems according to historical and emotional undertones in this very personal vignette. 163 pp. $17.84 from Xlibris Corp. To order, go to www.xlibris.com.

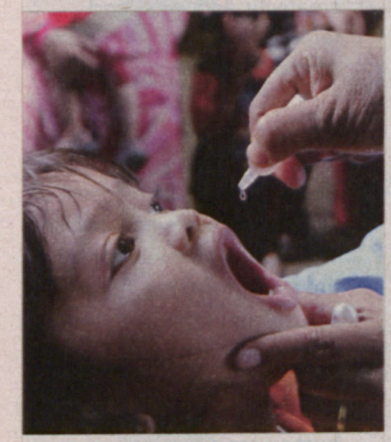
TEN WAYS TO MOTIVATE KIDS
By Glenn M. Fay Jr.

Written by an experienced high school teacher, researcher, and father, this book strives to answer the perennial question: How can we motivate kids to be more successful in school and in life? The book is a concise review of stories, research, and strategies that focus on developing knowledge, skills, and supportive relationships, and helping kids find personal meaning in their learning. 70 pp. $14.95 from Oakleigh, Inc. To order, send a check to Oakleigh, P.O. Box 177 South Hero, VT 05486 or call 802-372-5257.

On TV

RX FOR SURVIVAL, A GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGE

PBS, November 1–3, 9–11 p.m. ET/PT. Check local listings.



This fascinating, six-part series gives viewers a short course in public health, from the 19th century to the present. Episode One introduces the "Disease Warriors"—19th century scientists such as Louis Pasteur who developed germ theory and created a powerful new weapon against disease—the vaccine. "Rise of the Superbugs" describes advances in antibiotics and the swell of bacteria resistant to them. Later episodes explore the delivery (or not) of antibiotics, vaccines, and other vital treatments to Third World countries; mosquito-borne illnesses; disease prevention; and global outbreaks. A related project is Rx for Child Survival, which will raise funds to help poor children from Nepal to Mali survive past age five. Two aid organizations, CARE and Save the Children, have joined the campaign. More information for students is available at www.pbs.org/rxforsurvival.

SAVE OUR HISTORY: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

History Channel, November 4, 6 a.m. ET.

Explore how ecologists and the National Park Service are working to preserve Yellowstone from the threats of pollution, sprawl, and tourists, while still keeping it accessible to visitors. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years. Teaching materials are available at www.aetv.com/classroom.

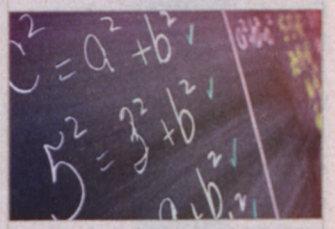
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE—VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

PBS, November 7, 9–11 p.m., ET, check local listings.

This is an encore broadcast of a two-hour documentary about the last days of the Pacific War. The story begins on the night of March 10, 1945, when a wave of Allied firebombers hit Tokyo. Despite huge devastation, Japanese leaders did not yield. In fact, Japanese warships were on a rescue mission sailing toward Okinawa, the island dotted with hidden caves that became a killing ground for Americans and Japanese. After 82 days, the Japanese were defeated, more or less. But Truman came to realize that Okinawa was only a precursor to what an invasion of Japan would be like. In July, the Potsdam Declaration called on Japan to surrender or risk "prompt and utter destruction." But in Tokyo, the government ignored it. Only after the Soviet Union entered the war on August 8, two days after an atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima, did the cabinet consider surrender. With comments from Japanese historians and a focus on the Soviet Union's role, this documentary takes a deeper look at how the war finally ended. More information can be found at www.pbs.org.

CONCEPTS IN ALGEBRA

Discovery Channel, November 17, 5 a.m. ET.



Arabic numerals and algebraic concepts, including variable expressions, equations, and functions, are explained in this hour-long program. It can be taped and used in the classroom for one year with teaching materials available at http://school.discovery.com.

BIOGRAPHY—GEORGE WASHINGTON: AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY

A&E, November 23, 7 a.m., ET.

This episode of the popular Biography series explores Washington's life and career, focusing on the 10-day period in 1776 when he altered the course of the Revolutionary War. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years with teaching materials available at www.aetv.com/classroom.

TLC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—PROBLEM-SOLVING: MATH I

TLC, November 25, 6 a.m. ET.

A look at ancient Rome in its prime, how scientists solve tough problems, and tips on using lists and tables to organize information. This 30-minute show is part of a series designed for grades K–6 that consists of segments edited from original documentaries. Tape it and use it in your classroom for two years, with teaching materials available at http://school.discovery.com.

HAMLET

Hallmark Channel, November 28, 3 a.m., ET. Check local listings.

This two-part film adaptation of Shakespeare's classic tragedy, starring Campbell Scott and Blair Brown, is set in America at the turn of the 20th century. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year. Teaching materials are available at www.historychannel.com/classroom.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and by Cable in the Classroom's Access Learning *magazine at www.ciconline.org.*

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Art at the Astrodome

An art education student finds out there is something she can do to help.

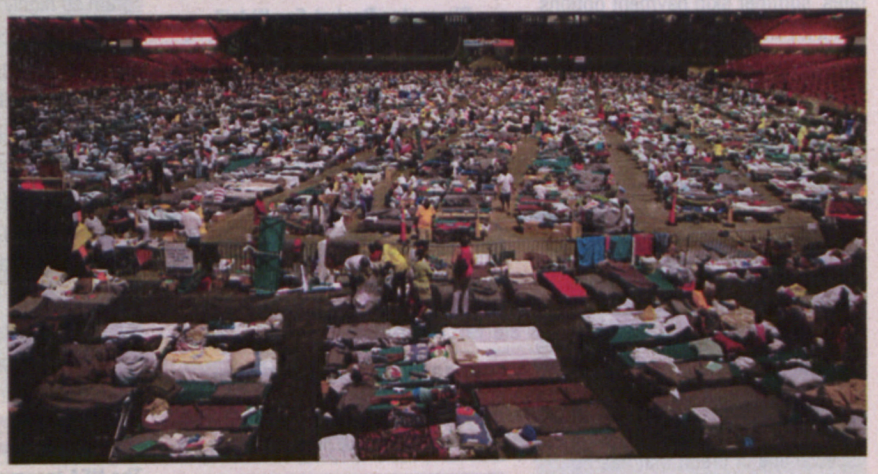
BY RACHELLE OMENSON

Ten thousand evacuees, one stadium, and nothing to do. It seemed unimaginable that these people might have to wait months, even years, to regain some structure in their lives. Of course, after wading in contaminated water or clinging helplessly to your roof shingles, boredom and rest might be welcome respites.

However, children bounce back quicker than adults. It was the children who ran giggling up and down the aisles of cots at the Astrodome, yelling back to their parents, "I'm right here!" But amid relief workers, chronically ill elders, hundreds of police, and exhausted parents, the kids only had nylon cots to go back to. And that gets boring.

I wondered what I, an art-teacher-in-training, could do. Saturday morning, I decided not to wonder anymore and took the next flight to Houston. There was no plan to this plan because if the fuzzy logic didn't work, I was out hundreds of dollars and a whole lot of wasted Labor Day weekend. (I apologize now to the true practitioners of art therapy because I faked being one of you. But I swear it was worth it.)

Arriving at the Astrodome, I told the guard I was the volunteer art therapist. Clearly this sounded logical because she yelled over to the other gatekeeper, "Open that gate, the art therapist is here." O.K., that worked.



Rachelle Omenson brings a dose of much-needed art to Gulf Coast evacuees.

Inside, from up high, it didn't look like people, just a moving carpet of rectangles. "Hello, I'm the wandering art teacher. Does anyone want to draw?" I asked the first kids I saw. Surprisingly, they ran over to a table laden with packaged snacks and pushed them aside as I pulled boxes of crayons and markers from my vest and sketch pads and construction paper from my wheeled bag.

They never asked why I was there. They never said they were too tired to draw. They only asked if I also had any clay. In fluorescently lit, dirty section 432, we set up art class. They called me teacher and raised their hands when I asked them questions.

They signed their artwork and volunteered endless information about their experiences in New Orleans. I asked them to draw whatever they wanted and not surprisingly most drew houses surrounded by swirling water. In the water, some put mean-looking sharks and snakes. There had been a rumor that the New Orleans aquarium was going to burst and man-eating animals were suddenly going to swim into their homes.

"MOST DREW HOUSES surrounded by swirling water. In the water, some put mean-looking sharks and snakes."

Next morning, I came back with a neon-pink poster board "Art Room" sign and spread my supplies the floor. Seconds later, children were standing there with gigantic eyes wanting to touch everything. But they didn't. They asked first. Just like in school.

They drew houses again, but they drew Spiderman too. And the real little kids drew swirly stuff that could've been water, but it could have been their mom. They molded clay into crosses, balls, and snake shapes.

They even cleaned up—as if they needed structure in a sea of chaos. A 15-year-old boy took more cots and made a squared-off area for creating art. A 10-year-old girl grabbed a broom and started sweeping when the crayons got out of control.

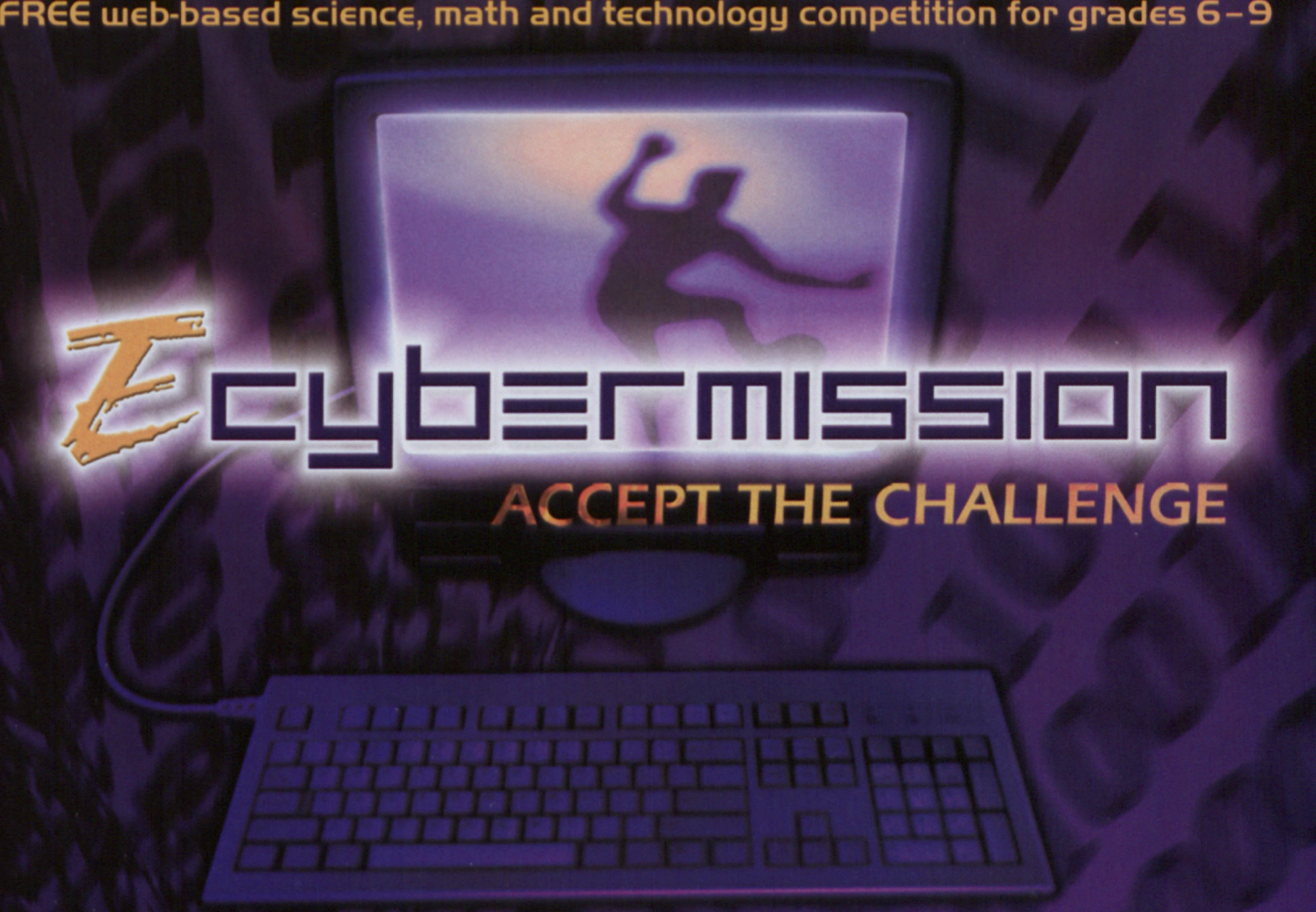
I didn't have a good answer when the kids asked if I would be back tomorrow. Their faces dropped when I said I had to go home to Philadelphia. But it was comforting to hear that a real activity room was being set up for them that day, and that school would be underway the following week.

On the flight back, as I sorted through the drawings the kids had given me, I felt my own private hurricane of unease. Did I hit my art educator peak just one day before starting to student teach? Is anything ever going to live up to doing art in a football stadium? I have to believe that it will.

Rachelle Omenson is an NEA Student member at University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Read a longer version of her story at **www.neatoday.org**. She has co-founded A Million Smocks to help those who need a dose of art. Visit www.amillionsmocks.org.

PHOTO TOP: RACHELLE OMENSON

FREE web-based science, math and technology competition for grades 6–9



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